PPA conference kicks off today at Crowne Plaza. PAGE 2

'This is a huge loss of revenue for the CNMI.' PAGE 4

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

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KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

After nearly a year since breaking ground, the Commonwealth Ports Authority in collaboration with the Department of Public Works officially unveiled the completed Route 323 or "Industrial Drive" through a ribbon cutting ceremony last Friday.

Route 323 officially opens

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nearly a year after breaking ground, the Commonwealth Ports Authority in collaboration with the Department of Public Works officially unveiled the completed Route 323 or "Industrial Drive" through a ribbon cutting ceremony last Friday.

See ROUTE on Page 4

Bicameral conference committee adopts budget bill for FY 2024

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

After several days of deliberations, the bicameral conference committee adopted last Saturday a mutually agreed budget bill that identified $163.4 million as the total budgetary resources and $114.2 million as the total local revenue and resources available for appropriation for the CNMI government's operations in fiscal year 2024.

See BUDGET on Page 4

Members of the House of Representatives conference committee shake hands with Senate conferees after they adopted on Friday the budget bill for government operations in fiscal year 2024. The Senate and House conferees, however, made some amendments on Saturday and voted again to adopt their final product of the budget legislation.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

BUILDING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Last week Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang proclaimed Oct. 2-6, 2023 as "Digital Inclusion Week" in the CNMI. They were joined by special assistant for Broadband Policy and Development Glen Hunter and leaders from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. During digital inclusion week, hundreds of companies across the nation, along with organizations, and individuals participate in special events and campaigns to promote and increase digital equity in their communities.

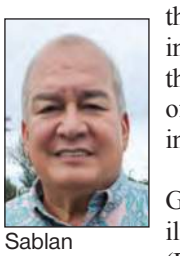
NMC

CNMI residents got $1.9B in pandemic relief

» Most per capita in any insular area

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Residents of the Northern Marianas received $1.9 billion in COVID-19 relief, which is the most funding per capita than residents of any other insular area.



Sablan

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) disclosed in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend that according to the U.S. Government

See CNMI on Page 4

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN

Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:

5

INSIDE

NATION
The White House on Friday directed federal agencies to get ready for a shutdown.
PAGE 12

HEALTH & FITNESS
A corn's "cob" is the long, cylindrical structure that is attached to the stem of the corn plant and is covered with kernels.
PAGE 14

LIFE & STYLE
Suga, a member of K-pop supergroup BTS, began fulfilling his mandatory military duty Friday as a social service agent.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

PPA conference kicks off today at Crowne Plaza

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The four-day 30th Pacific Power Association Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition will kick off today, Monday, at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's Hibiscus Room.

At a press briefing last Friday at Crowne Plaza, PPA acting executive director Gordon Chang said PPA is all about having three types of members.

Chang said one is the utilities and they have 25 utilities from all over the 19 Pacific Islands.

He said then they have the commercial members, who are composed of folks that sell engines, consultants, or whoever that has to do with the utilities.

Chang said the third one is the affiliates, which are the donor partners like the World Bank, European Union, Asian Development Bank, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, and others.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Pacific Power Association acting executive director Gordon Chang and Commonwealth Utilities Corp. acting executive director Betty G. Terlaje discuss the four-day PPA Annual Conference and Trade Exhibition that will kick off today, Monday, at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan's Hibiscus Room.

He said before the COVID-19 pandemic, they had 156 members, but they're slowly coming back now.

Chang said 18 utilities registered to attend the conference and that they are hitting close to 200 people.

"From what I was told the number we have is 198 participants and that's not include the participants that coming from the local utilities, CUC (Commonwealth Utilities Corp.)," he said.

This year's conference theme is "Technology and Finance Readiness for a Green, Sustainable and Resilient Power System Network."

Chang said because the conference is being held this year on Saipan, CUC introduced them to the University of Hawaii and they're coming in and have some funding that they would like to use it on the member utilities.

He said not only the University of Hawaii, but also folks from the National Renewable Energy are also coming.

"We've been surprised from the interest it has that we've come up here in Saipan," Chang said.

CUC acting executive director Betty G. Terlaje said they're not expecting 198 participants from off-island as they're even worried about making 150 because the cost of airfare has significantly gone up.

"And now it's 298 so that's very pleasant news for CUC, for the CNMI. This is one of the reasons we did this, we're so far away our economy is suffering the most but also to have the Pacific leaders in the utility industry come and see what the CNMI, this side of the islands are going through with regards to our utilities," Terlaje said.

Hopefully, she said, the members will bring some solutions to CUC too and vice versa, they could share their challenges.

Terlaje said this conference is a great opportunity to network and be able to avail and benefit from the other utilities of what they have to offer, what CUC has to offer in the presentations.

Last year, PPA voted that the conference will be held on Saipan.

This is CUC's third time to host the conference. The first one was in the 1990s and the second one was in 2001.

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According to the published study of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council in 2022 regarding news media use and perceptions, news media literacy, civic engagement, and community values in the Northern Islands: **Saipan Tribune was among the most frequently used and trusted local news sources among CNMI residents surveyed.**

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October declared Youth Empowerment Month

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
Correspondent

CHRYSTAL MARINO

Staff from the Office of Youth Affairs, Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, Division of Youth Services, Office of Women's Affairs, and other supporting agencies in the government and private sector join Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang as they designated the month of October as Youth Empowerment Month through a proclamation signing last Thursday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

Recognizing the CNMI's young leaders and agencies that support them and to encourage hundreds more in the community, Gov. Arnold I Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang joined the Office of Youth Affairs to declare October as Youth Empowerment Month during a proclamation signing ceremony last Thursday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

The proclamation not only recognized the youth in the community but also encouraged and advocated for community support for these rising leaders.

"Youth empowerment is one of the serious solutions to preserving our future and to acknowledge the value and positive endeavors of CNMI youth…the future and dreams of the Commonwealth lies in the hopes dreams and aspirations of CNMI youth," the proclamation read.

Youth were also encouraged to address situations and take action in order to improve their access to resources.

In his remarks, Palacios recognized the Office of Youth Affairs and the other government agencies and the private sector that support young individuals through programs and opportunities.

"I hope that in our community we continue to look at the next generation of leaders and community leaders who will continue and improve the lives and the quality of life in our community. I encourage each and every one of you to participate in any program whatsoever that brings together our youth," he said.

Office of Youth Affairs special assistant Delbert T. Pua shared in his remarks that, "In order to empower our youth. we first must understand what they need and how they can be empowered. You are so often seen as a problematic demographic and perceived as being unruly and not having the right skills to succeed in the workforce. However, there's a lot of potential that can be unlocked if we invest in this demographic."

He added that as a community the CNMI needs to invest in the next generation of leaders and summarized the definition of youth empowerment as "taking control, becoming responsible, and becoming active."

"Change starts with young people pushing our government and our system to do its job effectively," said Pua.

Vinnie Sablan, speaker for the 19th Youth Congress; Peaches Bayot, vice speaker; and senators Ayden Yumul and Maili Peter were in attendance at the event and shared their thoughts on youth empowerment.

"We would like to commend Youth Affairs for organizing this event and all of the organizations and agencies that came and showed up in support for our youth. It's really important to recognize our youth in the CNMI because it's all about creating positive platforms to empower us all and it's all about social engagement and really providing more opportunities for our youth to be active citizens in our community in the CNMI," said Sablan

Peters said "I think it's very important and it's very comforting knowing that we have a bunch of support systems all around us, different offices private sectors really supporting and encouraging the idea of programs being built for our youth."

Sablan added, "We may be young, we may be kids, we may be teenagers, but our youth in the CNMI need to recognize that we have a voice and we can make very positive impact in our community. It's just a matter of mindset and a matter of everyone's environment as well."

CHRYSTAL MARINO

From left, Office of Youth Affairs special assistant Delbert T. Pua, Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang, 2023 Youth Empowerment Month chair Edmond H. Borja, and 19th Youth Congress speaker Vinnie Sablan during the Youth Empowerment Month proclamation signing ceremony last Thursday at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.

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MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
MVA-RFP-23-2304

Marianas Visitors Authority Representation, Promotional and Public Relations Services for the JAPAN MARKET

Submission /Closing Date: **October 10, 2023 Time: 3:00 PM ChST**

Submit sealed proposals to: Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after September 11, 2023 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-23-2304 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION, PROMOTIONAL, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR THE JAPAN MARKET."**

Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified courier mail service on or before October 10, 2023, and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Acting Procurement Officer Ms. Carol Chargualaf in writing of their intent to submit in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. This notice of intent may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to +1-670-664-3237 or emailed to cchargualaf@mymarianas.com and must be received no later than 3:00 PM., Chamorro Standard Time on September 29, 2023.

/s/ Gloria Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson,
MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Christopher A. Concepcion
Managing Director, MVA

SISTER REMEDIOS BUILDING FACILITY FOR RENT

Available for rent is a two-storey building (semi-concrete), the MMB Sister Remedios Building in Chalan Kanoa #2. Building size is approximately 155 ft. x 42 ft. with stairs, common areas and restrooms. First and second floor (approximately 6,000 square feet each floor) and common exterior areas. Parking lot has 32 stalls including two disability access spaces. Additional area may be available for playground/activity area. Several used split a/c units are in-place from former tenants. Smal water-tank available. 5 separate CUC power meters. Building has network wiring in-place.

Suitable and acceptable uses include office space, church, (business) non-profit organization; school; daycare and early childhood/preschool facility. Not suitable for other purposes such as poker room; bar or other inappropriate businesses. Fenced and gated perimeter. Rear Annex building may be available, depending on proposal for rent/lease of the entire premises (approximately 7,000 square meters).

Minimum Terms: Minimum three (3) year lease (longer term may be available). Tenant is responsible for maintenance and repairs of the building/property. Asking $5,000.00 per month/ negotiable.

To schedule an appointment to meet and discuss, please contact: Law Office of Robert T. Torres, counsel for Mercederian Missionaries of Berriz (MMB) at rttlaw@gmail.com or Whatsapp/Text: 287-7859.

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‘This is a huge loss of revenue for the CNMI’

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority has recently discovered that over 40% of tourists from a specific market have been opting to stay in Airbnb’s that are not part of the Hotel Association of the NMI and are therefore not required to pay the CNMI’s Hotel Occupancy tax. This, MVA fears, is a huge loss in revenue for the CNMI.

During an MVA board meeting last week, acting chair Gloria Cavanagh shared that MVA recently discovered that a large chunk of visitors coming to Saipan have been opting for Airbnbs instead of HANMI hotels.

“We found out that for a particular market, only 57% were actually staying at a HANMI hotel. That means 43% are staying at guest houses, Airbnbs, which may or may not be paying the Hotel Occupancy Tax. These are buildings that was supposed to be for rent or were once rental units that are now being used as transient accommodations but they’re still licensed for rental instead of licensed for these types of accommodations that should be paying hotel occupancy tax,” she said.

This is a concern for the CNMI because HANMI hotels are required by law to pay Hotel Occupancy Tax which is, in turn, used in the CNMI’s efforts to revive its tourism industry. Currently, 80% of the CNMI’s Hotel Occupancy Tax is transferred to MVA.

“Some 43% don’t stay at HANMI hotels, that’s big, that’s potentially 43% of the hotel occupancy tax that we receive now in that particular market, gone. It’s a huge loss of revenue for the CNMI and hopefully with our earmarks for 2024 budget, it’s going to be a huge loss as far as promoting dollars for MVA,” Cavanagh said.

Cavanagh explained that because there is no clear definition of what a “transient accommodation” pursuant to the law that governs the collection of Hotel Occupancy Tax, Airbnbs may or may not be paying the tax which is a loss for the CNMI.

“The definition of a lodging or transient accommodation was a little bit lose so I think what we need is legislation to tighten the definition of who actually should be paying this hotel occupancy tax or this transient accommodation tax. We’re looking at recommending tightening the definition. We do have some writeups on it and it’s something that we and hopefully the Chamber of Commerce and HANMI can go out and get someone to champion it in the legislature to push this along and have it passed,” she said.

Cavanagh noted that the possibility of Airbnbs not paying hotel occupancy taxes is also a huge concern now that MVA is expecting a huge drop in the number of Korean tourists coming to the CNMI.

“Basically, we’re looking at a 33% drop on Korean market arrivals or seats coming in in November and about a 27% drop in December. We only have two markets that are recorded and that’s Japan, which is currently very small, and we have the Korea. So, when you have Korea and it drops 33% from one month to another, that’s a lot and we need another market. It’s not just for the hotels or the hotel occupancy tax, but it’s also for collections for GRT and also CPA,” she said.

Cavanagh added that another concern is that with the increase in landing fees recently adopted by CPA, it will be a challenge to even fill the seats expected in the following months.

“CPA has its expenses, whether it;s divided by five people or 10, it makes a huge difference. And now that we have raised fees by 90%, it makes a huge difference especially since we were already at 30% higher than Guam. Now we’re at 150% higher and that’s what we’re looking at come Oct. 1. Because we have a drop in the number of seats, it’s now a matter of how are we going to be filling these seats as fares will be higher,” she said.

BUDGET

From page 1

The full Senate and House of Representatives are expected to adopt today, Monday, the conference committee’s final product, House Bill No. 23-66, House Substitute 1, Senate Substitute 2, Conference Committee Substitute 1. The adoption basically means the Legislature passes the budget bill or the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriation Act, and it will be submitted to the governor’s desk for action.

Without a balanced budget enacted into law by Oct. 1, 2023, there will be a partial shutdown of the government’s operations.

House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) on Saturday called for an emergency session in the House chamber today, Monday, at 10am, to take action on the conference committee’s final product.

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) said yesterday that the Senate’s emergency session will be today, Monday, at 3pm.

Villagomez and DeLeon Guerrero formed a conference committee after the House rejected last Sept. 15 the Senate’s version of the budget legislation.

The conference committee began their meeting in the House chamber last Sept. 19. They deliberated for several days until they reached a mutually agreed final product on Saturday.

The conferees adopted the final product on Friday, but the following day, they made further amendments and subsequently voted again to adopt the final product.

During Saturday’s meeting, Rep. Ralph N. Yumul (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the House conference committee, thanked his committee members and the Senate committee for a “somewhat smooth” process.

“It can be a little bit contentious but you know, that’s just part of the process. I’d like to thank everyone that’s here on Saturday,” Yumul said.

Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota), who chairs the Senate conference committee, said the Senate conferees also share the same sentiments. He thanked the Senate and House conferees and all the Legislative staff who assisted them in getting the final product.

“We’re at a crossroads in certain parts of the bill, but we are able to resolve that with understanding that now we have revenue legislations in both houses that we can push through to address some of the many issues that were not addressed in this budget,” Manglona said.

Manglona, who presided over the conference committee meetings, said they hope that with the passage of those bills that could resolve a lot of underfunded activities that could not be addressed in this round.

“And so we hope that additional future legislations will allow for all employees to go back into 80 hours or whatever hours we can restore would greatly help our people,” he said.

On the debated donation of sick leave issue, the conferees agreed to the Senate version that added a new Section 403 of the bill.

The new section states that “when an employee volunteers to donate sick leave, the donated sick leave shall be based on the donor’s current base hourly salary and shall be converted into equivalent sick leave hours based on the recipient’s current base hourly salary. Provided that the donated sick leave hours shall not exceed 1,040 hours.”

On reprogramming authority, the conferees agreed on the Senate version that reads “the governor shall have 100% reprogramming authority for the departments, agencies, and offices of the executive branch, provided that the municipal entities shall not be subject to this reprogramming authority without the consent of the mayor.”

The Senate version also states that “the reprogramming authority shall not apply to Section 604 of this Act.”

Section 604 refers to revolving accounts.

The Senate version also further states that “reprogramming shall not be used for hiring of personnel or salary adjustment of active personnel.”

The authority to reprogram shall not apply to the funds appropriated to the legislative and judicial branches as well as to those funds appropriated by the respective legislative delegations.

Pertaining to utilities, the conferees agreed to amend the House version and accept the Senate version that added a new subsection.

The bill now states that “except as provided in subsection (c), the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. monthly utility billings for all departments and agencies shall be paid by the central government after all the funds in the general revolving accounts are exhausted.”

Subsection (c) states that “except for the judicial branch and legislative branch, all utilities, including the municipalities of Rota, Tinian, Saipan, and the Northern Islands, shall be paid by the central government. Provided that any shortfall of utility payments of the judicial branch and legislative branch shall be paid by the central government.”

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CNMI

From page 1

Accountability on Tuesday, as of last February, the CNMI got $1.9 billion in COVID-19 relief, $39,100 per capita, 50% more than American Samoans and more than double the funding for each resident of Guam, or the Virgin Islands.

GAO disclosed that the CNMI, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands received more than $32 billion in COVID-19 relief funds over 100 programs.

American Samoa got $1.3 billion, Guam $2.7 billion, Puerto Rico $24.8 billion, and U.S. Virgin Islands $1.5 billion.

Sablan said GAO stated that the COVID-19 relief, which exceeded the Northern Marianas’ 2019 pre-pandemic gross domestic product, helped the economy stay afloat.

The federal funds also allowed the CNMI to continue government operations and provide health care, infrastructure improvements, and other essential public services during the pandemic.

GAO reported that Commonwealth officials faced challenges dealing with the massive funding, including insufficient administrative capacity, unclear allowable uses for the money, narrow time frames for spending, and meeting reporting requirements.

Sablan said the CARES Act, Public Law 116-136, one of six funding laws the U.S. Congress enacted in response to COVID-19, required GAO to track spending related to the pandemic.

ROUTE

From page 1

CPA, joined by DPW, CNMI government officials and personnel, and members of the CNMI community, officially opened Route 323 via a ribbon cutting ceremony last Friday.

Route 323, or Industrial Drive, is the strip of road stretching from behind the Army Reserve to the CNMI Seaport.

Seaport committee chair Pete P. Reyes stated that to unveil a project that has been long overdue, is special especially since Route 323 is vital in the transportation of goods from the Seaport to CNMI consumers.

“CPA is the gateway to economic development, so having to fix this road is very important for all the users. This project has been long awaited and I’m proud to say that today, it’s a reality,” he said.

Reyes stated that the improvements made to Industrial Drive is important as it essentially makes the transportation of goods easier which will ultimately contribute to boosting the CNMI economy.

“We understand the importance of efficient transportation which is why this project has been a priority for our agency and port users. This construction of this road has been a substantial investment for our island, one that we are confident will yield significant return. This new road will increase economic activity and attract new businesses to the area. It will also improve the efficiency and transportation of goods to and from ports reducing congestion and travel time,” he said.

The Seaport committee chair finished by thanking all those who contributed to making the renovations to Route 323, a reality.

“I want to thank all who made this possible; Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation for their appropriation of funds to help. And also, other government agencies that supported this project as well as the private companies that helped in the construction of this road. In addition, Saipan Stevedore made a huge contribution to this project. Most importantly, I want to thank the community who has been patient throughout this construction process. This road will benefit everyone, and we are grateful for all the support and cooperation we have received,” he said.

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, who took part in the unveiling of Route 323, shared that going through Route 323 last Friday was the first time he went through the strip of road without having to maneuver through massive potholes.

This, he said, was a testament to the efforts the Commonwealth is making in its infrastructure.

“I think this is the first time in a long time that all of us did not have to navigate around potholes, steer clear of uneven pavement, or maneuver road damage to drive through Industrial Drive. In fact, it was quite a pleasant drive here, especially with the Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park and our beautiful Pacific Ocean serving as the backdrop. Having just celebrated another road project ribbon cutting last week, the completion of the Route 323 project, or Industrial Drive Road Improvement project, is another testament to our Commonwealth’s determination to see through infrastructure progress and, ultimately, the betterment of our island community,” he said.

Palacios said the completion of Route 323 represents another major step toward a more connected and better maintained infrastructure for the CNMI.

“The improved access and the capacity of the new Industrial Road to withstand heavier loads will undoubtedly lend to the efficiency of the movement of goods, enhanced safety, and the economic activity of our islands and the improved quality of life for all our residents,” he said.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, CPA and DPW officially broke ground on the Route 323 project last October 2022.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS

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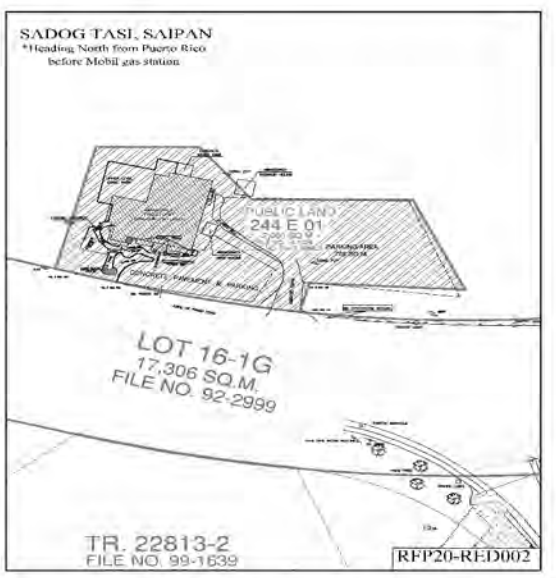
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: October 30, 2023

"LEASE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC PROPERTIES IN SAIPAN"

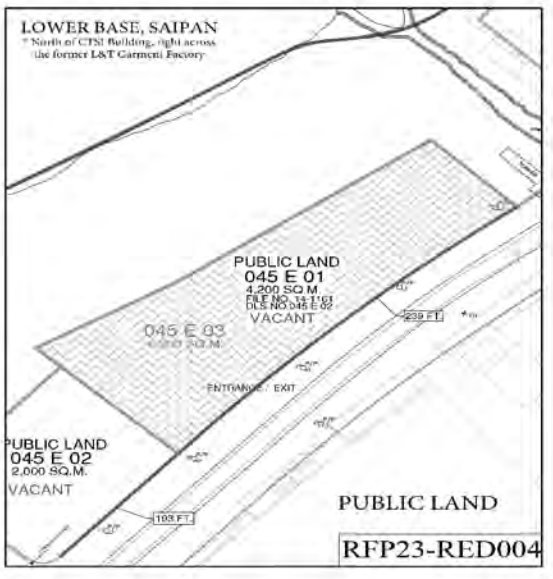
Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David Apatang, through the Department of Public Lands (DPL), are soliciting sealed proposals from interested and qualified companies or individuals for the purpose of leasing and commercial development of the following public land in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as is:

RFP: RFP23-RED001
Lot Number: 046 H 01
Area Size: 307 sq. meters
Location: Susupe
Site Visit: September 28, 2023 @ 10am



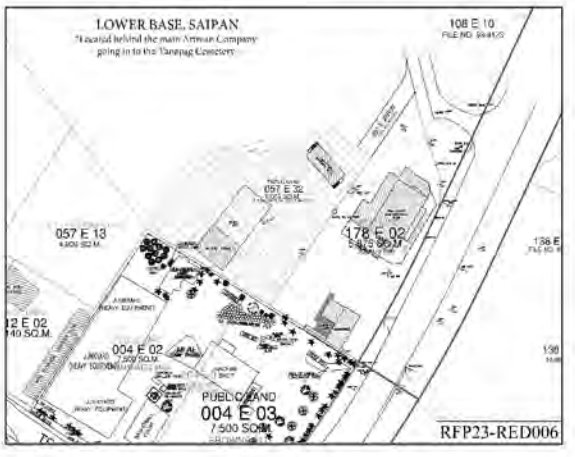
RFP: RFP23-RED002
Lot Number: 244 E 01
Area Size: 2,000 sq. meters
Location: Sadog Tasi
Site Visit: September 27, 2023 @ 10am

RFP: RFP23-RED003
Lot Number: 117 D 15
Area Size: 3,011 sq. meters
Location: Puerto Rico
Site Visit: September 27, 2023 @ 1pm



RFP: RFP23-RED004
Lot Number:045 E 01
Area Size: 4,200 sq. meters
Location: Lower Base
Site Visit: September 26, 2023 @ 1pm

RFP: RFP23-RED005
Lot Number: 045 E 02
Area Size: 2,000 sq. meters
Location: Lower Base
Site Visit: September 26, 2023 @ 1pm



RFP: RFP23-RED006
Lot Number: 057 E 32
Area Size: 6,059 sq. meters
Location: Lower Base
Site Visit: September 26, 2023 @ 10am

The RFP instruction and information package (RFP Packet) is available at the Department of Public Lands office, located on the 2nd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, during the hours of 7:30am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays. The full package of RFP is available to download at www.dpl.gov.mp or can be emailed to anyone interested at no cost.

Interested proposers from overseas may request an RFP Packet by email. The request must reference the selected RFP number and location of choice. Requests should be sent to the address shown below.

Questions from proposing firms regarding the contents of the RFP packet must be received, **no later than 4:30 pm on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 ChST** and must be submitted in writing via mail, email or facsimile to, Secretary, Department of Public Lands at the following address:

Department of Public Lands
P.O. Box 500380
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone number(s): (670) 234-3751/52/53
Facsimile number: (670) 234-3755
Email: dpl@dpl.gov.mp

The DPL reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to waive any imperfection in any proposal, if, in its opinion to do so would be in the best interest of public land beneficiaries. All proposals shall become the sole property of the DPL.

/s/ **Teresita A. Santos, Secretary**
Department of Public Lands

OKTOBERFEST CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan kicked off its Oktoberfest celebration last Sept. 16 and continued last Saturday, Sept. 23. Enjoy two more Oktoberfest celebrations on Sept. 30 and Oct. 3 at the Garapan landmark.

Chamber to host scholarship awarding ceremony in Oct. meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to announce its upcoming October general membership meeting to be held at the Hyatt Regency Ballroom on Oct. 4 from 11:30am to 1:30pm.

The centerpiece of this meeting will be the Chamber scholarship awarding ceremony, where the prestigious 2023 Saipan Chamber of Commerce scholarship recipients will be announced. These deserving individuals will be honored for their outstanding educational accomplishments and contributions to the community.

The meeting will also include Chamber committee updates, keeping our members informed and engaged in the Chamber's ongoing initiatives. Attendees can expect to hear about the latest developments and opportunities within the organization.

Additionally, don't miss the opportunity to support the Chamber's Armed Forces Committee, as they will be selling raffle tickets during the meeting in an effort to help raise funds to support future plaque exchanges and initiatives, ensuring that we continue to honor the military personnel and veterans all while strengthening community ties with the Armed Forces. The SCC AFC have some exciting raffle prizes, don't miss out on a chance to win as well as support the committee and its initiatives.

Furthermore, the Chamber is proud to announce the launch of the 2023 Annual Toys for Tots Campaign, a community-driven effort to bring joy to children during the holiday season. This is a chance for us to make the holiday season a little brighter for local children on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. Attendees are encouraged to bring a toy to the meeting as their donation, helping us kick off this wonderful campaign.

Lastly, distinguished guest speaker, marketing manager and outreach specialist, Roman Tudela, MBA, from the CNMI Small Business Development Center network will share valuable insights into the CNMI SBDC Network's Programs & Services, offering valuable resources and support for our local businesses and provide information and areas of support through the SBDC network via their current and upcoming initiatives.

The registration fee for Chamber members is $25, while future Chamber members are welcome to attend for a fee of $35. This fee covers attendance, networking opportunities, access to presentations, and a delicious lunch.

For more information and to RSVP for the October general membership meeting, visit the Saipan Chamber of Commerce website at www.saipanchamber.com or contact the Chamber directly at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipanchamber.org

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the economic growth and development of the CNMI. The Chamber serves as the collective voice of the business community, advocating for their interests, fostering collaboration, and driving initiatives that support the local economy. ***(PR)***

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP23-GOV-42300102: PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT SERVICES FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

SUBMISSION DATE: 10:00 AM ChST OCTOBER 25, 2023

Governor Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Governor David M. Apatang, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), are soliciting sealed proposals for the Provision of Environmental Consultant Services for Capital Improvement Projects funded through the 702 Covenant funding by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of Interior.

The project package will be available in digital format only beginning **September 25, 2023** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours or online at Vendor Self Service (selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/Vendors/VBids). Proposals must precisely follow the submittal requirements identified in the Scope of Work.

A Pre-Proposal Meeting will be held via Zoom Meetings at **10:00 AM on October 10, 2023.** Questions regarding this RFP may be sumitted via email to Ms. Sunny Aldan-Salas at sunny.aldan@gov.mp no later than 4:00 PM ChST October 16, 2023. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective proposers.

Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent Form to the Acting Director of Procurement Services no later than **10:00 AM ChST, October 25, 2023.**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: (1) Qualifications of personnel or sub-consultants – 30%; (2) Past Experience and Performance for NEPA Compliance – 40%; and (3) Project Methodology – 30%.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

/S/ Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

/S/ Brien S. Nicholas Jr., Acting Director
CNMI Procurement Services

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority
Office of the Governor
"Driving You Forward"

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is notice to the general public that the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority's (COTA) Demand Responsive Shared Ride Service, Call-A-Ride Saipan (CARS) and the administrative office will be **closed** on the following days for its annual professional development.

Thursday, September 28, 2023
Friday, September 29, 2023

COTA's operation hours will resume on Saturday, September 30, 2023 and the administrative office hours will resume on Monday, October 02, 2023. We would like to kindly remind our community to plan their trips accordingly. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Sincerely,

/s/ ***Alfreda Camacho Maratita***
Special Assistant for Public Transportation

2nd Floor Rm. 216, Marianas Business Plaza, Susupe, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 664-2682; Fax: (670) 664-2692; Email: alfredac.maratita@gov.mp

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that there will be Board Committee Meetings on Friday, September 29, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room located on the second floor of the Captain George M. Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan on Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

COMMITTEE AGENDAS

AIRPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Public-Private Partnership
  2. Master Concession
IV. New Business:
  1. SIDA Badges
  2. Updated Airport Facilities Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

SEAPORT FACILITIES COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Ports Police Citation Enforcement
IV. New Business:
  1. Updated Seaport Facilities Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

PERSONNEL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Drug Policy
  2. Supervisor Evaluation/Desk Audit
  3. Contract Management Desk Audit/Performance Audit
IV. New Business:
  1. Adoption of Personnel Rules and Regulations: Sick Leave/Sick Leave Donations/Common Law Spouse
  2. Rota Ports Manager Employment Contract
  3. Saipan Airport Manager Employment Contract
  4. Executive Director Employment Contract
  5. Updated Personnel Affairs Committee Report
V. Executive Session (if needed)
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Adoption of Agenda, Adoption of Minutes
II. Public Comments
III. Old Business:
  1. Audit Corrective Action Update
IV. New Business:
  1. Saipan Airport Air Traffic Control Tower Renovations Change Order No. 1 – Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
  2. Saipan Airport ARFF Training Facility Typhoon Repairs Professional Services Amendment No. 6 - Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
  3. Tinian Airport Parking Lot Expansion Construction Management Services Amendment No. 1 – Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
  4. Updated Financial Affairs Committee Report
    a. Grants Report
    b. Internal Auditor Report
V. Executive Session
VI. Miscellaneous/Announcements
VII. Adjournment

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom. Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

Kimberlyn King-Hinds
Airport Facilities Interim Chair

Ramon A. Tebuteb
Financial Affairs Chair

Pete P. Reyes
Seaport Facilities Chair

Joseph M. Diaz
Personnel Affairs Chair

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA)
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
2nd Floor Arrival Bldg.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website: www.cnmiports.com

NOTICE OF REGULAR MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) hereby gives notice that a Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Friday, September 29, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. in the CPA Conference Room located on the second floor of the Captain George M. Fleming Building at the Port of Saipan on Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
  1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Adoption of Agenda
  4. Adoption of Minutes
II. PUBLIC COMMENT(S)
III. CORRESPONDENCES
IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS
  1. Financial Affairs Committee (with Grants and Internal Auditor Reports)
  2. Airport Facilities Committee
  3. Seaport Facilities Committee
  4. Personnel Affairs Committee
V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
VI. OLD BUSINESS
  1. Public-Private Partnership
  2. Drug Policy
  3. Supervisor Evaluation/Desk Audit
  4. Contract Management Desk Audit/Performance Audit
  5. Master Concession
  6. Ports Police Citation Enforcement
VII. NEW BUSINESS
  1. Adoption of Personnel Rules and Regulations: Sick Leave/Sick Leave Donations/Common Law Spouse
  2. Rota Ports Manager Employment Contract
  3. Saipan Airport Manager Employment Contract
  4. Executive Director Employment Contract
  5. Saipan Airport Air Traffic Control Tower Renovations Change Order No. 1 – Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
  6. Saipan Airport ARFF Training Facility Typhoon Repairs Professional Services Amendment No. 6 - Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
  7. Tinian Airport Parking Lot Expansion Construction Management Services Amendment No. 1 – Supplemental Budget Request and Sanctioning
VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION
IX. MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS
X. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. A time limit may be imposed. Video Conferencing is also available via Zoom. Zoom link: Meeting ID: 898 0318 0837 Passcode: 573227

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS,
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

Shimona makes honor roll at Oregon State

CORVALLIS, Ore.— Erin Shimona from Saipan has made the Oregon State University's Scholastic Honor Roll for Summer 2023.

A total of 3,385 students earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to make the listing. To be on the honor roll, students must carry at least six graded hours of course work.

Shimona is a junior taking up Human Development and Family Science.

As one of only three land, sea, space and sun grant universities in the nation, Oregon State serves Oregon and the world by working on today's most pressing issues.

Its more than 35,000 students come from across the globe, and our programs operate in every Oregon county. Oregon State receives more research funding than all of the state's comprehensive public universities combined. At Oregon State's campuses in Corvallis and Bend, marine research center in Newport, OSU Portland Center and award-winning Ecampus, we excel at shaping today's students into tomorrow's leaders. ***(PR)***

Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation signing set this Friday

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence and various community partners are pleased to invite members of the community to the Domestic Violence Awareness Month proclamation signing ceremony.

The event will be held on Friday, Sept. 29, 10am in the Royal Taga Ballroom at Saipan World Resort.

This event aims to officially recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the CNMI, under this year's theme, "Support All Survivors. End Victim Blaming!" The ceremony will be livestreamed in partnership with KUAM and will be available for viewing on their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/kuamnews.

The DVAM proclamation signing ceremony will feature a distinguished guest speaker and include the presentation of the annual Bridge of Light Award. Additionally, attendees will have the opportunity to explore various information booths showcasing different community programs.

The prestigious Bridge of Light Award is bestowed upon one exceptional individual who has made notable contributions to ending domestic violence and sexual assault in the CNMI.

"As a community, we unite to raise awareness, amplify voices, and end victim blaming. Together, we support all survivors on the path towards a brighter, violence-free future," said NMCADSV associate director Kiki I. Benjamin.

This statement encapsulates how the BOLA recipient should embody the essence of a "Bridge of Light" for victims and two survivors. This year's Bridge of Light Award sponsors include Bridge Capital and the Tan Siu Lin Foundation.

Community members are strongly encouraged to actively engage in increasing awareness about domestic violence and expressing solidarity with victims and survivors throughout Domestic Violence Awareness Month 2023. NMCADSV has organized a series of events scheduled throughout October, extending an open invitation to the community to gather and join in championing this important cause.

On Sunday, Oct. 1, 2023, community members are encouraged to join the Day of Prayer event that will be observed at various faith-based organizations pledging to spend this day talking with their congregation about domestic violence and supporting victims and survivors. Confirmed faith-based organizations include Cornerstone Christian Church, Grace Christian Assembly (Kagman), Grace Christian Assembly (Navy Hill), Grace Christian Assembly (San Antonio) Hanom Lina'la (Tanapag), Seventh-day Adventist Church and others. DVAM organizers will be participating in the Mass at 9:30am hosted by Kristo Rai Parish.

On Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023, at 5:30pm, the Saipan Candlelight Vigil for Victims of Domestic Violence will take place at Giovanni's, Hyatt Regency Saipan. This solemn event aims to remember and mourn those who have lost their lives to domestic violence and to create a healing space for loved ones.

The community is warmly invited to attend the upcoming Day of Unity Event on Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Capitol Hill Softball Field, from 11am to 4pm. This event consists of an array of engaging activities for all ages, including live cultural performances, information booths, child-friendly activities, a diverse selection of food vendors, and the chance to win exciting raffle prizes. Additionally, participants can register for a chance to receive complimentary DVAM 2023 T-Shirts, while supplies last. The Day of Unity Event aims to provide a day of togetherness, learning, and enjoyment for families in the community.

On Purple Thursday, Oct. 19, 2023, from 4pm to 6pm, the Purple Wave, Walk, & Roll Event featuring the Men's Walk will kick off at the San Vicente Children's Park. The event will begin with registration and offer free face painting and poster making. Participants will then engage in roadside waving, followed by a walk and roll activity. Since it is also National Purple Thursday, attendees are encouraged to wear purple and bring signs or banners to help raise awareness about domestic violence. Registered participants will receive a complimentary DVAM 2023 T-shirt, available while supplies last.

NMCADSV is also excited to announce a month full of KKMP radio shows, featuring engaging public discussions with a diverse lineup of guest speakers addressing topics related to domestic violence. Make sure to mark your calendars and tune in to 92.1 FM every Wednesday morning at 8am throughout the month of October. Broadcasting dates and topics will be announced on the NMCADSV's social media accounts.

Moreover, be sure to follow NMCADSV's social media platforms @EndViolenceNMI for the latest updates on DVAM events happening on Rota and Tinian. Stay connected as announcements will be shared shortly.

For further information, contact NMCADSV at (670) 234-3878 or via email at info@endviolencenmi.org. ***(PR)***

18TH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
EMERGENCY BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.
Board of Education Conference Room
Building 1241, Capitol Hill
Saipan, MP 96950

AGENDA[1]

I. **Preliminary**
   1. Call to Order
   2. Roll Call
   3. Adoption of Agenda

II. **Public Comments**[2]

III. **New Business**
   1. Consideration of Petition for Injunctive and Declaratory Relief concerning constitutionally required funding levels for the Public School System

IV. **Executive Session**[3]
   1. Personnel
   2. Other matters

V. **Adjournment**

[1] **Join Zoom Meeting**
https://zoom.us/j/98942668405?pwd=Q1poQGtFdVA4NjJSbHBReWg3Y2FQUT09
Meeting ID: 989 4266 8405
Passcode: 464385

[2] Pursuant to BOE Policy 0415, public comments are limited to 30 minutes. We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.

[3] Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by the NMHC with HUD funds.

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS 09/19/23

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan MP, 96950
Telephone(s): (670)234-9447/6866

These notices shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after October 05, 2023, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington D.C., for the release of Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019 P.L. 116-20, enacted on January 27, 2020, announced via Federal Register Notice, to undertake the following activity and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

Project/Activity Type	Purpose	Location	Total Project Cost
CNMI Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) 200-foot new replacement tower project.	Replacement of tower	Mt. Tapochau, Saipan	Approximately $1,883,100.00 of CDBG-DR funds; no other funds are to be used.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) website at www.nmhcgov.net or NMHC Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com ; or on file at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan or NMHC CDBG-DR Office in Beach Road, Chalan Laulau, Saipan, examined during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI Holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to Northern Marianas Housing Corporation. You may submit comments to the following options: via mail to P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950; direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan or drop-box located in front of the building; and via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net. All comments received by **October 04, 2023, 4:30 p.m.** will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing the submission of a request for release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.

ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Arnold I. Palacios consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Washington D.C. approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and related laws and authorities and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Washington D.C will accept objections to its release of fund and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of **fifteen days** following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; (c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to Ms. Tennille Smith Parker, DRSI Division Director, HUD, via email at Tennille.S.Parker@hud.gov or via telephone (202)402-4649. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor of the CNMI

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXXIII, Issue No. 190

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Don't abandon your right to vote—the stakes are too high

It's easy to be dissatisfied with the actions, or inactions, of government these days. While Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives dithered over a plan to keep the federal government funded in order to avoid a calamitous shutdown — a scenario that has "always been a loser for Republicans politically," according to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell—their leaders still found time to schedule a hearing on their ill-advised impeachment inquiry of President Joe Biden.

The effort centers on whether Biden benefited from his son's overseas business dealings, has almost zero chance of actually leading to an impeachment and seems mostly to be about smearing the Democrat. It also ignores the broader, long-term issue of familial influence peddling as recently demonstrated by the GOP's collective disinterest in the $2 billion investment Donald Trump's son-in-law received from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman just months after Trump left office. Oh, and has anyone mentioned that Trump, who was twice impeached as president, still faces a slew of criminal charges from multiple prosecutors?

With this as the backdrop, many Americans are, unsurprisingly, frustrated by the likely prospect of a Trump-Biden rematch in 2024; neither has broad popularity. Polls have shown a lot of Democrats don't want Biden to be their nominee, yet Trump's standing with voters other than his core supporters is so weak that the incumbent is favored to best him in the general election (although polls show it to be close).

Political extremism, the rise of hate groups, book banning, the anti-LGBTQ+ backlash—there's plenty of reason for concern that democracy and basic constitutional rights are at risk. This is, after all, a country where the 45th president, a man prone to excessive self-love and with a minimalist regard for truth, could pursue a scheme to thwart election results with fake electors and an attack on the U.S. Capitol and, at least so far, get away with it. Anyone who isn't just a tad nervous about America's future has either not been paying attention or is in deep denial.

All this only underscores the need for all Americans to have their voices heard. Voting is the essential obligation of citizenship. Last Tuesday marked the annual National Voter Registration Day. It is estimated that one in four Americans who are eligible to vote is not registered. The one-day outreach may help. Organizers estimate that a decade of effort has increased voter rolls by about 5 million, thanks also to boosts from celebrities like Taylor Swift. But how shameful that it is necessary. While there are surely some for whom registration could prove a challenge, there are clearly too many who take their civic duty—a right that many have fought and died for—far too lightly. And this isn't just about participating in national elections. Neighborhoods with high registration numbers and voter turnout are more apt to have some clout with the politicians who need their votes.

What does it take to remedy this situation? In Maryland, one need only use the state's online voter registration system or submit an application through your local elections board. Other state offices, including local branches of the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and local offices of the Department of Health and Department of Human Services and others accept applications,

See DON'T on Page 9

Russia's kidnapping of Ukrainian children under the spotlight at United Nations

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the *The Philadelphia Inquirer.*

When President Joe Biden urged world leaders on Tuesday not to diminish support for Ukraine, he used a phrase whose importance you may have missed. Speaking at the U.N. General Assembly, Biden charged (correctly) that Russia's price for peace is "Ukraine's capitulation, Ukraine's territory, and Ukraine's children."

I've added italics to those last two words because of Moscow's policy of illegally transferring tens of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia proper, or Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine, and trying to transform them into good little Ukraine-hating Russians.

In his own speech to the United Nations, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also denounced Russia's seizure of his country's children as "purely a genocide." That Russian war crime goes to the heart of why Ukraine believes it must win this war.

According to official data from the Ukrainian government, at least 19,546 children have been transferred illegally to Russian control since the war began. However, those numbers only include cases reported by a parent or guardian. The real figures are probably much higher, and there is no record of whether those children have been adopted or sent to Russian orphanages. Only 386 have been returned.

In a war where bombing civilians is central to Russian military strategy, no war crime seems too heinous to Moscow—from bombing schools, markets and hospitals to torture, rape and murder in Russian-occupied cities.

Yet there is something especially evil about kidnapping children, which relates directly to Vladimir Putin's belief that there is no such thing as a Ukrainian nationality and that the state has no right to exist.

According to this thinking, deporting Ukrainian children makes sense: All Ukrainian youngsters should ultimately be "reeducated" to love the Russian motherland and despise the Ukrainian "Nazis."

"Forced deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children is one of the elements of a war of genocide," Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin told me when I visited Kyiv in July. "This is a matter of intentional policy."

That is why the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Putin and his commissioner for children's rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, alleging their responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation of children from occupied areas of Ukraine.

Russia has weaponized food (blocking Ukrainian grain exports) and energy (making threats to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which it occupies), as Zelenskyy pointed out. It has also weaponized ecology, blowing up the Nova Kakhovka dam, which flooded cities, farmlands, and animal life. As if this was insufficient, Putin has even weaponized Ukrainian kids.

"The Russians use different ways to take the children out of Ukraine," Kostin related, "not only taking them from orphanages but from families."

In some cases, parents in occupied Ukraine were encouraged to send their children for "rest and recuperation" to camps in Crimea that sought to reeducate them. Many kids were bused there directly from school without parental permission. Many never returned.

During the Russian destruction and occupation of Mariupol and other cities, many thousands of children from orphanages, boarding schools, shelters and hospitals were taken to Russian-controlled areas, even though they might have had family members elsewhere in Ukraine. Children weren't allowed to call friends or relatives, who had no way to find them. Phones were taken away. Young children were put up for adoption.

Often, children were in shelters because their families had been killed by Russian bombing, as in Mariupol, where Russia flattened the city and refused to permit a humanitarian corridor to let civilians exit.

Moscow has made propaganda out of kidnapped children, filming youngsters being given toys and candy and being "happily" adopted. "Children are a sacred cause. We took them out of the conflict zone, saving their lives and health," said the utterly cynical Putin in June. Naturally, he never mentions that most of the children were displaced or orphaned by Russian bombs.

A recent documentary called "Uprooted," produced by the Kyiv Independent newspaper and available on YouTube, interviews some of the few children who were rescued by incredibly brave relatives or guardians.

I interviewed one of those relatives featured in the film, Valentina Yermachkova, who was a 19-year-old student in Dnipro when the war started. Her mother and brother were killed by a Russian shell as they sought food after the Russians invaded Mariupol. Her two younger sisters were moved to a hospital in occupied Donetsk, but not allowed to contact relatives. Fourteen-year-old Sofiia had hidden her brother's phone and eventually managed to sneak a call to her older sister.

Yermachkova, on her own, took buses through Poland, Lithu-

See RUSSIA'S on Page 9

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Are Americans in a funk? It's time for 'The Little Engine that Could'

By BRUCE YANDLE
Tribune News Service

Adam Patric Miller has taught high school English for more than 25 years in three states. He is the author of "A Greater Monster."

Trust in institutions is declining, expectations for small business outcomes are diminishing and real household incomes are sinking; it is fair to say that Americans seem to be in a funk.

The University of Michigan's September Consumer Sentiment Index is sitting at 71.6 points, which is well above the June 2022 all-time low of 50 but well below the 101 achieved in February 2020. While the index is mired at pre-pandemic levels, the economy has marched ahead. According to a related Economist magazine study, for the first time in more than 40 years, the sentiment index no longer tracks traditional measures of economic activity such as employment, income and GDP growth. Instead, the index seems to be locked in a cellar.

The consumer funk is deep and difficult to understand. Could it be worry about inflation? Is it falling personal income? Or lost trust in government and other institutions that help people cope in times of trouble and that are celebrated in better times? Perhaps we need to revisit Jimmy Carter's 1979 malaise speech. When struggling with an OPEC-driven energy crisis, Carter noted: "There is a growing disrespect for government and for churches and for schools, the news media and other institutions. This is not a message of happiness or reassurance, but it is the truth and it is a warning."

If consumers are in a funk, they are not alone. According to a recent National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) survey, owners and operators of America's small businesses are worried, too. The organization's "Small Business Optimism Index decreased 0.6 of a point in August to 91.3, the 20th consecutive month below the 49-year average of 98." NFIB also reported that a net negative 37% of small business owners are looking for better business conditions over the next six months, and while struggling to fill job openings, the number of business owners expecting improved sales continues to decrease.

Unfortunately, the CEOs of 143 of the nation's largest firms share the NFIB survey's negative outlook. According to the Business Roundtable's third quarter 2023 survey:

"CEOs continue to moderate their plans and expectations for the next six months, particularly in employment. While two-thirds of our companies intend for hiring to increase or stay the same, roughly a third expect to scale back."

There is one last item to drop in the mix when trying to understand the current funk and that's what is happening to U.S. personal income. The most recent data show that real median household income has fallen for the last three years, year-over-year, after skyrocketing 7.14% in 2019. This kind of sinking volatility inspires caution and a tendency to hunker down while reassessing the situation.

Returning to Jimmy Carter's 1979 malaise assessment and his comments about declining trust, current polling from Gallup indicates that just 26% of those recently surveyed trust the presidency and public schools. Only 25% trust organized labor, and a measly 14% trust newspapers. At 65%, small business ranks highest among the 14 ranked institutions, and the military ranks second with a confidence reading of 60%.

Upon reflecting, it's clear that major features of our lives have not fallen completely apart and taken a new tack, and that fundamental relationships—both economic and social—still matter. It is also clear that a new equilibrium has not been achieved since COVID disrupted critical features of life. When we add to this witch's brew a high level of toxic political rhetoric, threats of government shutdowns, the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war, and badly disturbed food and energy markets, the array of challenges faced by ordinary citizens, owners of small businesses, and corporate CEOs becomes all the more daunting.

So, where do we stand? Optimism or pessimism? When all else fails, I turn to the authors of great books for inspiration. In this case, it's Watty Piper, author of "The Little Engine That Could." In the current situation, we have to hunker down and repeat aloud, "I think I can. I think I can." Do it daily. Then, give it time.

Some kinds of dogs shouldn't be allowed as pets

By TYLER COWEN
Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. He is coauthor of "Talent: How to Identify Energizers, Creatives, and Winners Around the World."

Over the last two years, at least five people in the UK have been killed by American XL bully dogs, prompting no less than the prime minister himself to come forward with a plan to control the dogs. The upshot of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's policy is that they will have to be registered, neutered, muzzled in public and insured, with an eventual ban to follow.

The decision offers some important lessons about regulation. First, sometimes an outright ban is better than charging owners or users a fee, or what economists call Pigou taxes. Under some economic theories, bans should be exceedingly rare. Instead, the government should charge a high fee for the right to own or use something. In this case, people who really want to keep their XL bully dogs will just pay more for a license.

Society does not, after all, insist on absolute safety in most other walks of life. Many children die in swimming pools, yet they are not banned.

XL bully dogs are different. They are symbols of fear and aggression, and their muscular body and fierce countenance reflects this, as does their very name. They are especially popular with criminal gangs.

There is value in getting rid of the symbol altogether. An outright ban of XL bully dogs probably makes people feel more safe than a high tax that makes the dogs rare but not illegal. That extra feeling of security might be partly irrational, but it still matters for how people process their daily stress.

A ban is also easier to enforce than a tax. If the dogs are banned, it is difficult to take one around in public without being spotted. Tax evasion, in contrast, is quite common, and tax laws can be difficult to enforce. The British government may be unwilling to throw people in jail for their unwillingness to pay their XL bully dog tax. Nor is it easy for the government to determine which are the responsible owners of XL bully dogs and which are irresponsible.

The question, then, is how to value owner demand for XL bully dogs.

To put my own cards on the table: I am frankly suspicious of anyone who wants to own a bully dog. Limiting preferences for such dogs now would help limit the spread of the XL bully dog itself, which has been in the UK only since about 2014 or 2015. Over time the dogs could become more established with more clubs of dog owners, more specialized trainers, and in general more support services. By banning the dogs now, the government might stop a wider preference for such dogs from developing. A ban would also help limit long-term frustration if, as I suspect, the decision is reached that XL bully dogs cannot be allowed to spread without limit.

It would still be allowed, of course, to own many other kinds of dogs. By one count there are 339 different breeds, many of which are able to protect their owners from assault.

Where I live, in the state of Virginia, it is illegal to own as pets the following animals: bears, wolves, coyotes, weasels, badgers, hyenas, non-domesticated cats, alligators and crocodiles. I don't consider those meaningful restrictions on my liberty, and in fact these laws can boost the liberty of your pet dog or cat or rabbit. The state cannot avoid some policing of nature, and it makes sense to side with the pets that more people are likely to own.

How about a ban of XL bully dog for the U.S.? That case is weaker, in part because population density is much lower, and in part because Americans seem to have a higher risk and violence tolerance than do British citizens. Still, what Americans call pit bulls do face varying restrictions , for instance in Miami, New York, San Francisco, and Prince George's County in Maryland. (What the British are calling a bully dog is an offshoot of the pit bull; the bully dog lacks a full legal definition.)

More notably, many states prohibit their cities and counties from placing restrictions on pit bulls, or sometimes on any dog breeds. A ban on pit bulls in Denver was recently repealed , for example. Politics has spoken, for better or worse.

And one larger point about politics: Isn't it strange to see a British prime minister issue a statement on a public matter that might in the U.S. be handled by a mayor or—to use the standard cliché—the local dogcatcher? If nothing else, it shows the deep federalist roots of the U.S. system of government. Yes, American politics is increasingly nationalized, but there's still a lot that separates the U.S. from Mother England.

DON'T

From page 8

too. There is no charge but you do have to prove where you live—if not with a driver's license then perhaps bank statements, utility bill or official government document with your name and address.

In 2020, Marylanders had the legitimate excuse of COVID-19 to reduce in-person voting but still cast more than 3 million votes thanks largely to mail-in ballots. In 2024, besting that turnout requires voters to make a greater effort including, for thousands, registering to vote and they can do it, if necessary, on the day of the election. The time for excuses must stop.

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RUSSIA'S

From page 8

ania, across Russia and back into occupied Donetsk, and demanded the return of her siblings. "I was afraid, but I knew I had no choice," she told me when I met her and her sisters in Dnipro. "Now I realize I might have gotten stuck there, too." She now studies law in the hopes she can work on efforts to rescue other Ukrainian kids.

Rescuing children is one main reason why Prosecutor General Kostin was set to arrive in Washington, D.C., this week to discuss the issue with top U.S. officials; it will also be raised at side meetings during the U.N. General Assembly. "Bringing our children back is a priority," Kostin told me, "for us as a state and for the civilized world."

"Countries in the global south that suffered in the past from violations of basic human rights need to understand that this evil will return if they put their short-term interests higher than their values," Kostin insisted. He was referring to countries such as South Africa, which maintains close ties with Russia and isn't supporting Ukraine.

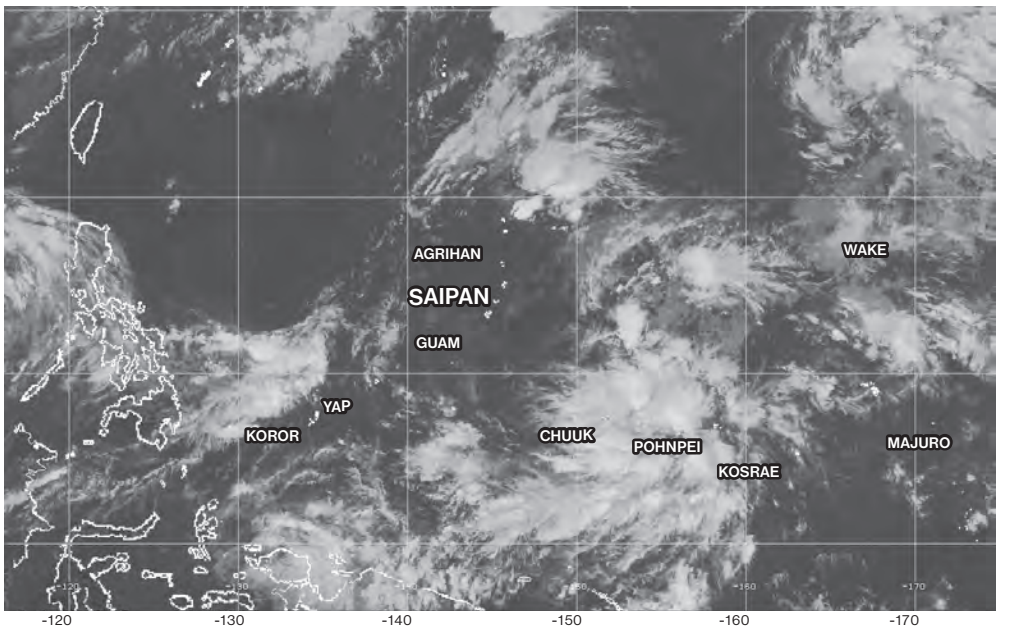
Whether Ukraine can retrieve its stolen children is a huge question mark, and U.S. officials should offer any help requested. But public focus on the issue is rightly aimed at those leaders worldwide, and in this country, who still seek to shake Putin's hand.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Southwest winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. South winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
88° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°	87° 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:07 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam Doppler weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas Waters this morning. The Ipan buoy reveals a 3 to 4 foot east-northeast swell, while computer wave model guidance shows there could also be a 1 to 2 foot west-southwest swell, leading to combined seas of 3 to 5 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 76°
Majuro	Mostly Sunny	87° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:11 PM
Tuesday	6:06 AM	6:10 PM
Wednesday	6:06 AM	6:09 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:08 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:25 AM	2:58 PM
Tuesday	-	2:30 AM	3:51 PM
Wednesday	-	3:34 AM	4:39 PM
Thursday	-	4:36 AM	5:24 PM
Friday	-	5:36 AM	6:06 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	57° / 48°
Beijing	Sunny	77° / 54°
Hong Kong	Sunny	88° / 75°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Mostly Sunny	59° / 41°
Los Angeles	Sunny	83° / 65°
Manila	Thunderstorms	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	72° / 46°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	89° / 80°
New York	Thunderstorms	82° / 64°
Osaka	Rain	73° / 63°
Paris	Sunny	77° / 52°
Busan	Windy	72° / 64°
Rome	Sunny	75° / 52°
Salem	Thunderstorms	86° / 70°
San Francisco	Sunny	69° / 53°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	75° / 55°
Tokyo	Rain	66° / 59°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	85° / 65°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
1:59 AM	High Tide	1.66
9:52 AM	Low Tide	-0.12
5:34 PM	High Tide	1.86
10:57 PM	Low Tide	1.28

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1 up to Sep 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR 111	7:05AM	9:05AM	7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily up to Sep 4
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily from Sep 5

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1 up to Sep 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR110	11:40PM	5:35AM+1	6
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

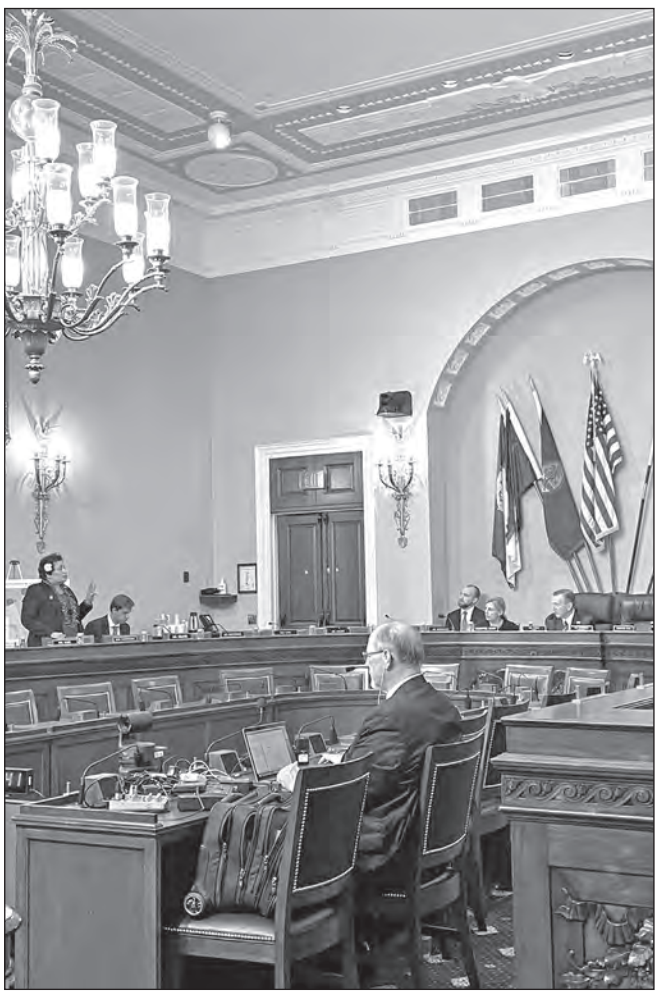
GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Amata welcomes testimony on importance of fishing rights to A. Samoa



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata of American Samoa speaks out on fishing issue in a recent House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing on Capitol Hill.

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Uifa'atali Amata took part in a recent hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations that examined U.S. waters and the marine sanctuary and monument. The hearing was titled, "Examining Barriers to Access in Federal Waters: A Closer Look at the Marine Sanctuary and Monument System."

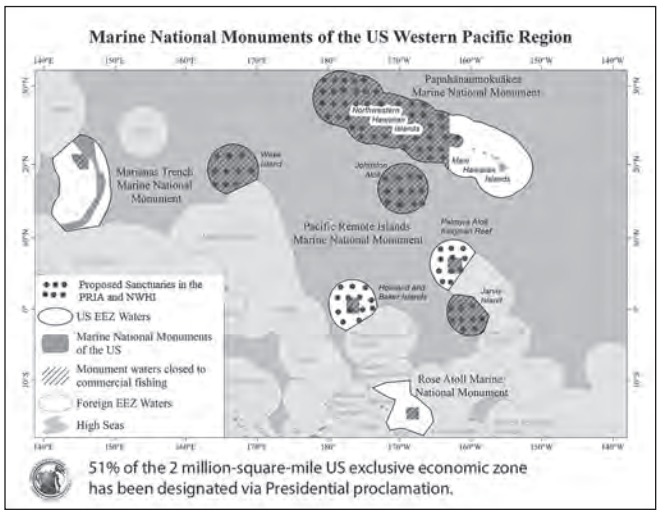
Amata gave remarks and used a visual display of the Pacific waters to defend the need for fishing rights, before asking key questions of the expert witnesses, emphasizing the fact that 51% of the 2-million-square-mile U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) has been designated via presidential proclamation.

"I want to show just how much the Biden Administration is taking from Samoans and other indigenous peoples in the Pacific. By expanding the Pacific Remote Island Marine National Monument, we will lose nearly all U.S. EEZ's in the Pacific," Amata warned. "At this critical time, with China increasingly gaining a foothold in the region, the United States will quickly become nothing more than a passive bystander in the world's largest fishery."

Following an administration witness' mention of working with the three governors of the U.S. Pacific territories, Amata said, "These three governors are united and are against the expansion," citing a bipartisan letter signed by all three.

Testimony submitted by American Samoa Gov. Lemanu P.S. Mauga also strongly emphasized American Samoa's priorities with a statement and supporting facts.

Lemanu said, "The importance of fishing and the ocean to the people and culture of American Samoa cannot be overstated. Samoans landed on these shores 3,000 years ago and utilized the natural resources both on land and in the sea to build a rich community. The ocean and its marine resources jave allowed Fa'asamoa, the Samoan way of life, to thrive for thousands of years. Samoan legends and cultural practices revolve around fishing and access to ocean waters. Fishing has provided Samoan people not just with food to eat but also a means to support families, especially during times of struggle. This reliance on fishing and marine resources has continued for centuries and remains the single largest pillar of the American Samoa economy today."


Marine National Monuments of the US Western Pacific Region
Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument
Marianas Trench Marine National Monument
Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument
Rose Atoll Marine National Monument
Proposed Sanctuaries in the PRIA and NWHI
US EEZ Waters
Marine National Monuments of the US
Monument waters closed to commercial fishing
Foreign EEZ Waters
High Seas
51% of the 2 million-square-mile US exclusive economic zone has been designated via Presidential proclamation.

Executive director Bill Gibbons-Fly of the American Tunaboat Association also gave compelling testimony.

"I am here today to testify to the significant adverse impact on the U.S. Pacific fishing fleets and to the economy of American Samoa resulting from the previous designation of Pacific Marine National Monuments under the Antiquities Act and the proposed creation of a Pacific Remote Islands National Marine Sanctuary under National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Actions under these two pieces of legislation have been and are being used to bypass and override the rigorous, science-based, and participatory fisheries management system established by Congress over several decades. Moreover, these actions are being taken with little thought to the economic consequences to an important sector of the U.S. economy, the economies of our U.S. territories, domestic and regional food security, and yes, even U.S. national security," he said.

Additionally, William Johnson Aila, a native Hawaiian fisherman called as a witness by the committee's Democratic Party membership, supported American Samoa's need for the American Samoa Economic Development Credit to bolster the tuna industry in the territory and any future qualifying development.

Together, this hearing's testimony once again strongly emphasized the overwhelming facts supporting American Samoa's position defending our local economy and the future of fishing for the territory. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

OPENING DATE: September 21, 2023 **CLOSING DATE: October 06, 2023 TIME: 4:00 P.M.**

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary
2023-021	CDBG-DR Construction Inspector- Rota	$25,000.00-$30,000.00 per annum- Ungraded

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: NMHC Rota Field Office located in Sinapalo, Rota; NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; or at the Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net . NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

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INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2023-010

(This ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: September 27, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Building Maintenance Services for NMHC's Housing Units in Saipan

Project Package will be available on August 28, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of Fifty Dollars ($50.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan on **September 07, 2023, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

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Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate $2,186,599 of Low Incoming Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which include project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing waiting lists. There are no changes from the previous QAP which included capital needs assessment, limiting developer fees, and income averaging.

Application for Credits

Owners/Developers wishing to apply for the Credits may obtain and complete a LIHTC Application. The LIHTC Application will be available on the NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "LIHTC Tab".

Owners/Developers must file the completed LIHTC Application along with the **$2,500.00 Application Fee** at NMHC's Office by the Application Deadline of **4:30 p.m., October 20, 2023.** NMHC staff will then review the applications and will notify the Owners/Developers of any deficiencies within 14-days time and the Owners/Developers will be given 14-days to correct any deficiencies and to provide any supplemental information requested by NMHC. The projects will be scored and recommendations will be made to the NMHC Board of Directors for approval at its **November/December 2023** Board Meeting.

Notification of Awards

NMHC will notify Owners/Developers of the projects receiving Credits within fifteen (15) days following the November/December 2023 Board of Directors meeting. The reservation letter must be signed and returned to NMHC by no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of notification.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Business

McCarthy giving hard-right GOP what they want

WASHINGTON (AP)—Staring down a fast-approaching government shutdown that threatens to disrupt life for millions of Americans, Speaker Kevin McCarthy has turned to a strategy that so far has preserved his tenuous hold on House leadership but also marked it by chaos: giving hard-right lawmakers what they want.

» But it never seems to be enough

In his eight months running the House, McCarthy has lived by the upbeat personal mantra of "never give up" as he dodges threats to his speakership and tries to portray Republicans as capable stewards of the U.S. government. He has long chided Washington for underestimating him.

But with the House GOP majority in turmoil, all but certain to hurl the country into a shutdown, McCarthy has set aside the more traditional tools of the gavel to keep rebels in line. Instead, he has acceded to a small band led by those instigating his ouster, even if that means closing federal offices.

It's an untested strategy that has left McCarthy deeply frustrated, his allies rushing to his side and his grip on power ever more uncertain with the Sept. 30 deadline to fund the government a week away.

"We still have a number of days," McCarthy said Saturday as he arrived at the Capitol.

"I think when it gets crunch time people will finally, that have been holding off all this time blaming everybody else, will finally hopefully move off," the California Republican said. "Because shutting down—and having border agents not be paid, your Coast Guard not get paid—I don't see how that's good."

Governing with a narrow House majority, the speaker is facing a more virulent strain of the hard-right tactics that chased the two most recent Republican speakers before him, Reps. John Boehner of Ohio and Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, into early retirement. Like them, McCarthy has tried various tactics to restore order. But more than ever, McCarthy finds himself swept along as far-right lawmakers, determined to bend Washington to their will, take control in the House.

McCarthy tried to win conservatives' support by agreeing to their demand for impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden and then by meeting their calls for spending cuts, only to be turned back whenever a few of them hold out for more concessions.

All the while, McCarthy has retreated from his budget deal with Biden months ago that established the spending threshold for the year. Instead, he is trying to reduce spending more in line with the level he promised the right flank during his tumultuous fight to become the House speaker.

Yet all the concessions seem to never be enough.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., who is leading the fight, crowed to reporters Thursday that, "if you look at the events of the last two weeks, things seem to be kind of coming my way."

Gaetz said he was delivering a eulogy for short-term funding legislation known as a continuing resolution—a mechanism traditionally used to keep the government functioning during spending debates.

Democrats have been eager to lay blame for the impending shutdown on McCarthy and the dysfunction in the House. Biden has called on McCarthy to stick to the annual spending numbers they negotiated to raise the nation's borrowing limit.

"He handed over the gavel to the most extreme in his party," said Massachusetts Rep. Jim McGovern, a senior Democrat.

With the House at a standstill and lawmakers at home for the weekend, McCarthy has turned to the plan advanced by Gaetz to start processing some of the nearly dozen annual spending bills needed to fund the various government departments and shelving for now the idea of stopgap approach while the work continues.

Auto workers still have room to expand their strike against car makers

Even after escalating its strike against Detroit automakers on Friday, the United Auto Workers union still has plenty of leverage in its effort to force the companies to agree to significant increases in pay and benefits.

Only about 12% of the union's membership is so far taking part in the walkout. The UAW could, if it chose to, vastly expand the number of workers who could strike assembly plants and parts facilities of General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, the owner of the Jeep and Ram brands.

Yet the UAW's emerging strategy also carries potentially significant risks for the union. By expanding its strike from three large auto assembly plants to all 38 parts distribution centers of GM and Ford, the UAW risks angering people who might be unable to have their vehicles repaired at service centers that lack parts.

The union's thinking appears to be that by striking both vehicle production and parts facilities, it will force the automakers to negotiate a relatively quick end to the strike, now in its second week. To do so, though, some analysts say the union might have to act even more aggressively.

"We believe the next step for UAW is the more nuclear option — going for a much more widespread strike on the core plants in and around Detroit," said Daniel Ives, an analyst with Wedbush Securities. "That would be a torpedo."

Sam Abuelsamid, an analyst at the consulting firm Guidehouse Insights, suggested that with so many workers and factories still running, the union has a number of options with which to squeeze the companies harder.

"They could add more assembly plants to the list," Abuelsamid said. "They could target more of the plants that are building the most profitable vehicles."

As examples, he mentioned a plant in Flint, Michigan, where GM builds heavy-duty pickups, and a Stellantis factory in Sterling Heights, Michigan, that produces Ram trucks.

All three companies said that talks with the union continued on Saturday, though officials said they expected no major announcements.

In Canada on Saturday, Ford workers began voting on a tentative agreement that their union said would increase base pay by 15% over three years and provide cost-of-living increases and $10,000 ratification bonuses. The tentative deal was forged earlier this week, hours before a strike deadline.

The union, Unifor, said the deal, which covers 5,600 workers, also includes better retirement benefits. If the deal is ratified in voting that will end Sunday morning, the union will use it as a pattern for new contracts at GM and Stellantis plants in Canada.

In the United States, the UAW began its walkout more than a week ago by striking three assembly plants—one each at GM, Ford and Stellantis. In expanding the strike on Friday, the UAW struck only the parts-distribution centers of GM and Stellantis. Ford was spared from the latest walkouts because of progress that company has made in negotiations with the union, said UAW President Shawn Fain. ***(AP)***

Nation

White House preparing for gov't shutdown

AP

Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., is surrounded by reporters looking for updates on plans to fund the government and avert a shutdown, at the Capitol in Washington, Friday, Sept. 22, 2023.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House on Friday directed federal agencies to get ready for a shutdown after House Republicans left town for the weekend with no viable plan to keep the government funded and avert politically and economically costly disruption of federal services.

» As House GOP lacks viable endgame for funding

A federal shutdown after Sept. 30 seems all but certain unless Speaker Kevin McCarthy can persuade his rebellious hard-right flank of Republicans to allow Congress to approve a temporary funding measure to prevent closures as talks continue. Instead, he's launched a much more ambitious plan to try to start passing multiple funding bills once the House returns Tuesday, with just five days to resolve the standoff.

"We got members working, and hopefully we'll be able to move forward on Tuesday to pass these bills," McCarthy, R-Calif., told reporters at the Capitol.

McCarthy signaled his preference for avoiding a closure, but a hard-right flank of his House majority has effectively seized control. "I still believe if you shut down you're in a weaker position," he said.

The standoff with House Republicans over government funding puts at risk a range of activities—including pay for the military and law enforcement personnel, food safety and food aid programs, air travel and passport processing—and could wreck havoc with the U.S. economy.

White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said Friday that if federal workers go unpaid it would be Republicans' fault. "Our message is: This doesn't have to happen," she said. "They can do their job and keep these vital programs continuing, keeping the government open."

With the Oct. 1 start of a new fiscal year and no funding in place, the Biden administration's Office of Management and Budget began to advise federal agencies to review and update their shutdown plans, according to an OMB official. The start of this process suggests that federal employees could be informed next week if they're to be furloughed.

President Joe Biden has been quick to blame the likely shutdown on House Republicans, who are intent on spending cuts beyond those laid out in a June deal that also suspended the legal cap on the government borrowing's authority until early 2025.

Many states expanding Medicaid programs to provide dental care to poorest residents

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—For months, Carlton Clemons endured crippling pain from a rotting wisdom tooth. He couldn't sleep, barely ate and relied on painkillers to get by.

The 67-year-old from Nashville, Tennessee, could not afford to see a dentist on the $1,300-a-month his family gets in Social Security and disability payments. So he waited for the state to roll out a program this year that offers dental care to the more than 650,000 Medicaid recipients like him who are 21 and older. Tennessee is spending about $75 million annually on the program.

"Man, I thought I had made it to heaven because the pain was over," he said after the tooth was pulled in July at the Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry. "When they did pull it out, I was so happy. I was so glad. Everything just changed after that."

His wife, Cindy, who also is on Medicaid, has had her teeth pulled at the clinic.

Medicaid, the federal and state health insurance program for the poor, requires states to provide dental coverage for children but not adults. But with a growing recognition of the economic and health costs of poor dental health and an influx of federal pandemic dollars, six states began or expanded their Medicaid programs this year to provide coverage for adults.

Access remains difficult in many of those states with some dentists refusing to treat Medicaid patients. Even those who want to expand their practice are finding themselves caught up in red tape.

Dr. Victor Wu, the chief medical officer for Tennessee's Medicaid program, said he was pleased with the rollout of Medicaid dental benefits that started in January, but he acknowledges the state needs to build out its network and increase the participation rate among dentists.

While dental care often is seen as routine, the poor often go without any care for years or even decades. Doing so has significant costs, both to taxpayers and to those who cannot afford treatment.

Asia

ASIAN BRIEFS

N. Korea's Kim sets forth steps to boost Russia ties as US, Seoul warn about weapons deals

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ordered unspecified steps to further develop relations with Russia after his recent visit to the country as his foreign rivals warn that any cooperation on military weapons would be dangerous and bring consequences. Experts speculated North Korea and Russia likely discussed banned arms transfer deals and other cooperation measures during Kim's six-day trip last week. They say the two countries are serious about sharply boosting their ties while they are engaged in separate confrontations with the West. During a Politburo meeting on Wednesday, Kim arranged for work to be done on further developing bilateral ties at "a new high level at the practical stage" to consolidate "the success" of his Russia trip, the official Korean Central News Agency said Friday.

Kim underscored the need to expand bilateral cooperation in every field, making a substantial contribution to the promotion of the well-being of the people of the two countries, KCNA said.

Pakistan's PM says manipulation of coming elections by military is 'absolutely absurd'

Pakistan's interim prime minister said he expects parliamentary elections to take place in the new year, dismissing the possibility that the country's powerful military would manipulate the results to ensure that jailed former premier Imran Khan's party doesn't win as "absolutely absurd." Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said it's the Election Commission that is going to conduct the vote, not the military, and Khan appointed the commission's current chief, so "why would he turn in any sense of the word against him?" In a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press on Friday, Kakar also lashed out at India for touting itself as the world's largest democracy while refusing to hold a democratic referendum in disputed Kashmir so its people can decide their future. And he said leaders in the region are discussing holding a forum to consider what changes Afghanistan's Taliban rulers would need to make before any country takes "a huge step" and recognizes their government. *(AP)*

US ambassador to Japan calls Chinese ban on Japanese seafood 'economic coercion'

TOKYO (AP)—U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel accused China on Friday of using "economic coercion" against Japan by banning imports of Japanese seafood in response to the release of treated wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant into the ocean, while Chinese boats continue to fish off Japan's coasts. "Economic coercion is the most persistent and pernicious tool in their economic toolbox," Emanuel said in a speech Friday in Tokyo, calling China's ban on Japanese seafood the latest example. China is the biggest market for Japanese seafood, and the ban has badly hurt Japan's fishing industry. "China is engaged right now in fishing in Japan's economic waters while they are simultaneously engaged in the unilateral embargo on Japan's fish," Emanuel said. He said China's intention is to isolate Japan.

Japan began gradually releasing treated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima plant into the sea on Aug. 24. The water has accumulated at the plant since it was crippled by a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011. China immediately banned imports of Japanese seafood, accusing Tokyo of dumping "radiation contaminated water" into the ocean.

Gases from PH volcano sicken dozens of children, prompting school closures in nearby towns

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Smog containing gases from a restive Philippine volcano sickened dozens of students and prompted 25 towns and cities to shut their schools on Friday as a health precaution, officials said. There was no imminent threat of a major eruption of Taal Volcano, which authorities said remains at a low level of unrest in Batangas province south of Manila. But they said its emission of sulfur dioxide-laden steam in recent days caused skin, throat and eye irritation for at least 45 students in nearby towns. Classes were suspended in 25 towns and cities in Batangas to keep students safely at home. Some schools resumed online classes and home learning that were in wide use at the height of the coronavirus pandemic, officials said. Smog has also been reported in Manila north of Taal in recent days, but the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said it was largely caused by vehicle emissions and not the volcano.

Taal, one of the world's smallest volcanoes, is among two dozen active volcanoes in the Philippines, which lies along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," a seismically active region that is prone to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The 311-meter (1,020-foot) volcano sits in the middle of a scenic lake and is a popular tourist attraction about 60 kilometers (37 miles) south of Manila. Taal erupted in January 2020 with a massive plume of ash and steam that prompted the evacuation of tens of thousands of people and the closure of Manila's international airport.

Taiwan factory fire leaves at least 5 dead, more than 100 injured

BEIJING (AP)—A fire and subsequent explosions at a golf ball factory in southern Taiwan killed at least five people and injured more than 100 others, and five people are still missing. The fire began on Friday night at the factory in Pingtung county and raged overnight. Three firefighters were among the dead, authorities said. Rescuers were still looking for four factory workers and one firefighter who remained unaccounted for, officials said. More than 100 people were taken to the hospital with injuries. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen in a speech in Taipei on Saturday expressed her condolences to the families of the victims and said she would travel to Pingtung to visit those affected by the disaster, according to Taiwanese news outlet Focus Taiwan. Tsai said the Pingtung county government had set up an emergency operation center to offer assistance to those impacted by the fire. Chou Chun-mi, magistrate of Pingtung county, said in a Facebook post that the cause of the fire was still under investigation. "Facing the grief of the family members, I could not say anything except to bow deeply, apologize, and express my deepest condolences," she said in the post, after visiting the funeral home and meeting with victims' families. Authorities said that natural gas may have contributed to the explosions, which occurred as firefighters were attempting to put out the fire.

World

Cracks in Western wall of support for Ukraine emerge

AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses a joint meeting of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington, Dec. 21, 2022.

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—Once rock-solid, the support that Ukraine has gotten from its biggest backers for its fight against Russia is showing cracks.

» As Eastern Europe, US head toward elections

Political posturing in places like Poland and Slovakia, where a trade dispute with Ukraine has stirred tensions, and Republican reticence in the United States about Washington's big spending to prop up Ukraine's military have raised new uncertainties about the West's commitment to its efforts to expel Russian invaders more than 18 months into the war.

And Russian President Vladimir Putin, who hopes to outlast allied backing for Kyiv, will be ready to capitalize if he sees Ukraine is running low on air defense or other weapons.

The West has long been shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine against Russia. But between Ukraine's impassioned, unending pleas for help, and huge handouts from its backers, signs of discord have emerged.

In July, Britain's defense minister at the time said Ukraine should show "gratitude" to the West, after Kyiv renewed its vocal — but unsuccessful — push to join NATO.

This week, a new bout surfaced after Ukraine filed a complaint at the World Trade Organization against three neighbors and European Union members — Hungary, Poland and Slovakia — for banning imports of Ukrainian farm products, a key export for the war-weary country's battered economy.

The three bristled at the move, with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki shooting back that his country is "no longer transferring any weapons to Ukraine because we are now arming ourselves with the most modern weapons."

Some EU officials have warned that Putin is reveling at the new show of Western discord at a time when Ukrainian troops are making slow gains in their counteroffensive against Russian forces, who still control a vast swath of eastern and southern Ukraine.

Still, from Washington to Warsaw, where the military cost and capabilities of helping Ukraine are at issue, officials are playing down any talk of a rift.

"I don't believe that one political dispute will lead to a breakdown," Polish President Andrzej Duda said, adding that his prime minister was only referring to newly ordered weapons that wouldn't ever go to Ukraine anyway.

Jake Sullivan, the Biden administration's national security adviser, said Thursday he believed that "Poland will continue to be a supporter of Ukraine."

Ukraine targets key Crimean city after striking Russia's Black Sea Fleet HQ

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukraine on Saturday morning launched another missile attack on Sevastopol on the occupied Crimean Peninsula, a Russian-installed official said, a day after an attack on the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet that left a serviceman missing and the main building smoldering.

Sevastopol was put under an air raid alert for about an hour after debris from intercepted missiles fell near a pier, Gov. Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote on the messaging app Telegram. He later added that another missile fragment fell in a park in northern Sevastopol, parts of which had to be cordoned off. Ferry traffic in the area was also halted and later resumed.

Loud blasts were also heard near Vilne in northern Crimea, followed by rising clouds of smoke, according to a pro-Ukraine Telegram news channel that reports on developments on the peninsula. Crimea, illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, has been a frequent target for Ukrainian forces since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Ukraine's intelligence chief, Kyrylo Budanov, told Voice of America on Saturday that at least nine people were killed and 16 others wounded as a result of Kyiv's attack on the Black Sea Fleet on Friday. He claimed that Alexander Romanchuk, a Russian general commanding forces along the key southeastern front line, was "in a very serious condition" following the attack.

Budanov's claim couldn't be independently verified, and he didn't comment on whether Western-made missiles were used in Friday's attack. The Russian Defense Ministry initially said that the strike killed one service member at the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, but later issued a statement that he was missing.

Health & Wellness

On Nutrition: Getting it right with corn and mushrooms

AP

A corn's "cob" is the long, cylindrical structure that is attached to the stem of the corn plant and is covered with kernels (the corn's seeds). The "ear" includes the outer green husk as well as the cob and kernels.

By BARBARA INTERMILL
Tribune News Service

Responding to a recent column about fresh corn, reader Al W. from Dallas writes: "Having grown up on a farm, I take exception with some of your cob/ear terminology. You wrote, 'What a treat to walk up and down rows of green cornstalks, searching for just the right cob to pick.' You should have used ear instead of cob. One picks an ear of corn."

I also misstated that we "dipped the cobs in boiling water" and that "a cob of corn has about 30 grams of carbohydrates."

"I doubt that a cob would have 30 grams of carbohydrates or much nutrition at all," reader Al continued.

He's right.

According to agricultural publisher CropForLife, a corn's "cob" is the long, cylindrical structure that is attached to the stem of the corn plant and is covered with kernels (the corn's seeds). The "ear" includes the outer green husk as well as the cob and kernels.

So we pick an ear of corn and eat the kernels off the cob, right? Thanks for pointing this out, Al.

Dave from Arizona asks: "I've read that in order to derive the full nutritional value from mushrooms, they should be nuked in the microwave for two to three minutes. Is this true, and are there other vegetables that should be cooked in any way?"

It appears to depend on which type of mushroom you are testing, Dave.

A 2016 study by Spanish researchers in the International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition tested the nutrient effects of various cooking methods on shitake, white button and oyster mushrooms.

The mushrooms lost more protein when they were fried and boiled than when they were microwaved or grilled. In fact, microwaved or grilled mushrooms maintained their nutrient values, along with increased levels of healthful antioxidant substances.

Another study published in Food Science & Nutrition in 2017 found somewhat different results when they looked at another type of mushroom grown in Africa, the Amanita zambiana.

These researchers found that frying as well as microwaving mushrooms enhanced their protein and antioxidant content. Among the tested cooking methods, they concluded that "the best method of cooking mushrooms that retains or enhances nutritional benefits is frying followed by microwaving."

Here's a couple more interesting facts about mushrooms. They are neither plants nor animals, says the Mushroom Council. Rather, they are part of the fungi kingdom, along with yeasts and molds.

Still, edible mushrooms are categorized as vegetables in the latest 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. That's due to their similarity nutrition-wise to this food group.

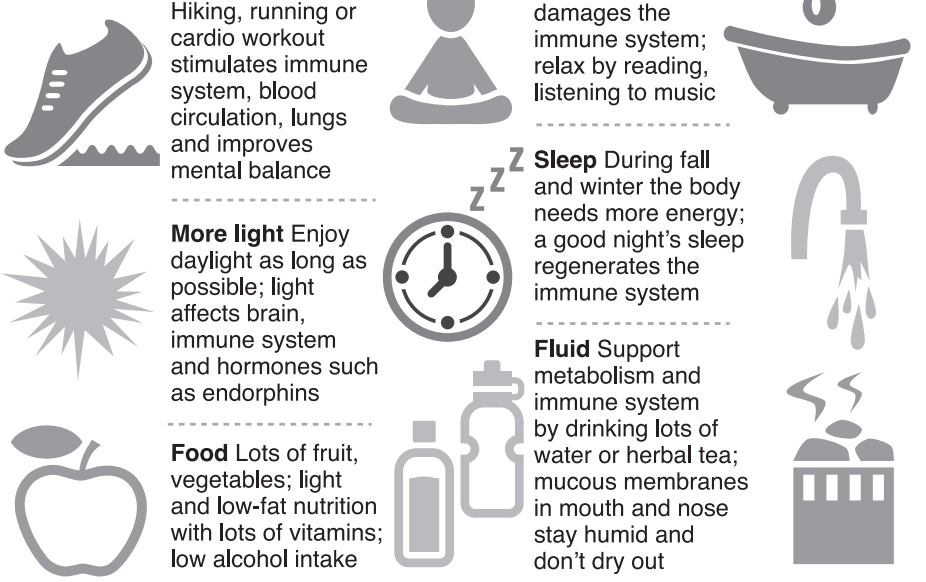
As regards to your other question about vegetables that should be cooked in any way, I will save this for a future column. Thanks for writing.

Barbara Intermill is a registered dietitian nutritionist and syndicated columnist. She is the author of "Quinn-Essential Nutrition: The Uncomplicated Science of Eating." Email her at barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.

Fit for fall

A sound immune system makes it easier to fight infections during transition from summer to fall.

How to strengthen your body's defenses


Outdoor exercise Hiking, running or cardio workout stimulates immune system, blood circulation, lungs and improves mental balance
More light Enjoy daylight as long as possible; light affects brain, immune system and hormones such as endorphins
Food Lots of fruit, vegetables; light and low-fat nutrition with lots of vitamins; low alcohol intake
Relax Stress damages the immune system; relax by reading, listening to music
Sleep During fall and winter the body needs more energy; a good night's sleep regenerates the immune system
Fluid Support metabolism and immune system by drinking lots of water or herbal tea; mucous membranes in mouth and nose stay humid and don't dry out
Wellness Take a warm bath; add thyme oil to help the respiratory tract; don't bathe longer than 15 minutes
Shower Switch between warm and cold showers in the morning; this strengthens the muscles, improves circulation and nervous system
Sauna Use sauna every second week; warmer body temperatures help the immune system fight infections

Source: Stern, health magazines Graphic: Staff, TNS

Alarming jump in obesity reported in 22 states, CDC says. Which areas had highest rates?

By ANN MARIE BARRON
Staten Island Advance, N.Y.

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.—An alarming jump in obesity has been reported in a growing number of states across the country, according to new data released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Obesity prevalence was highest in the Midwest and the South, where about 36% of adults were considered obese, the recent data provided to the CDC showed. In the West and Northwest, about 30% of adults were obese, it showed.

The data was collected by the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, and adults were considered to have obesity if their body mass index was self-reported to be at least 30.

According to the data, at least 35% of people in 22 states were considered obese. Ten years ago, not one state reported a percentage that high, the report said.

The CDC said the jump from 2021 to 2022 was also significant. That year, 19 states had an obesity prevalence at or above 35%.

The states with the highest percentage of obese people were Louisiana, Oklahoma and West Virginia, where more than 40% of the people were considered obese.

Other states found to have an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35% were: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.

New York reported obesity rates of 30.1%

Colorado, California, Vermont, Massachusetts, Hawaii and New Jersey reported rates between 25% and 30%. And Washington, D.C., reported the lowest percentage of obese residents—24.3%.

Adults with obesity are at increased risk for many serious health conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, severe outcomes from coronavirus (COVID-19), and poor mental health, according to the CDC. Additionally, people with obesity reported being stigmatized because of their weight.

The 2022 Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps highlighted the need for population-based interventions to ensure that all people have access to healthy foods, safe places for physical activity, stigma-free obesity prevention and treatment programs, the CDC said.

"Our updated maps send a clear message that additional support for obesity prevention and treatment is an urgent priority," said Dr. Karen Hacker, director of CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, in the announcement of the data. "Obesity is a disease caused by many factors, including eating patterns, physical activity levels, sleep routines, genetics, and certain medications. This means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach."

Today is
National Women's Health and Fitness Day
September 29, 2022

National Women's Health and Fitness Day focuses on the importance of regular physical activity and health awareness for women, and is the largest annual event of its kind in the country—with 500 local groups and 50,000 to 75,000 women participating each year.

Source: Checkiday.com
Graphic: Staff, TNS

Life & Style

BTS member Suga begins alternative military service in S. Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—Suga, a member of K-pop supergroup BTS, began fulfilling his mandatory military duty Friday as a social service agent, an alternative form of military service in the country.

Suga, 30, became the group's third member to start carrying out their military duties. The two others, Jin and J-Hope, are already performing active service at army bases.

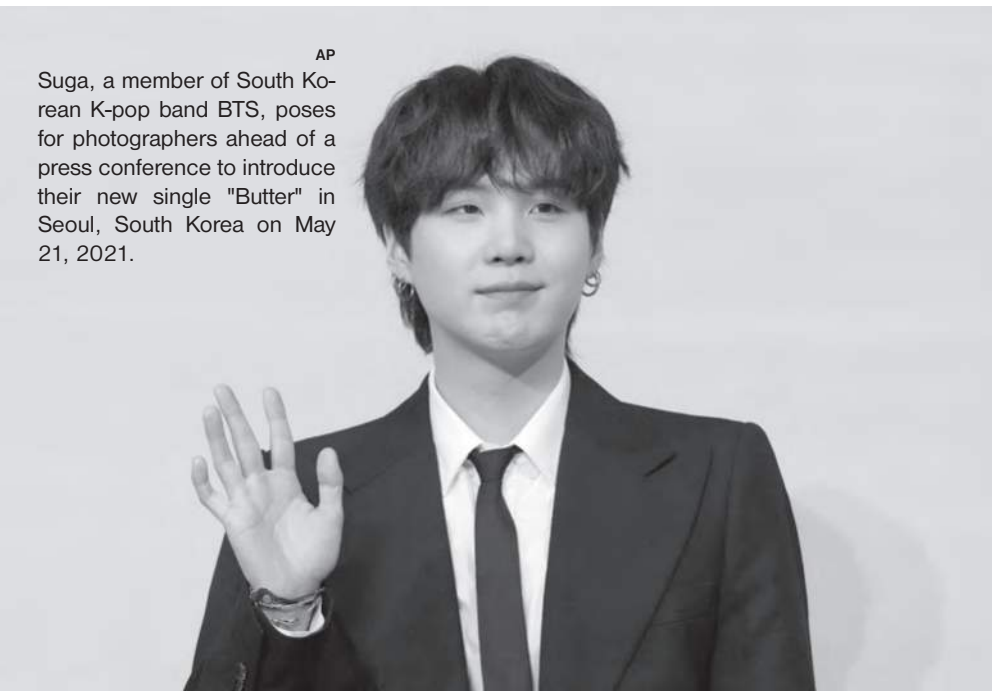
"I'll faithfully serve and come back … Please stay healthy and let's meet all again in 2025!" Suga wrote in a message posted on the online fan platform Weverse.

BTS's management agency, Big Hit Music, said that Suga later began commuting to a workplace designated under the country's alternative military service system.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men must serve in the army, navy or air force for 18-21 months under a conscription system established due to threats from rival North Korea. Individuals with physical and mental issues can instead carry out their duties at non-military facilities such as welfare centers, community service centers and post offices for 21 months.

Local media reported Suga's alternative service was likely related to a shoulder surgery that he underwent in 2020.

Active duty soldiers are required to begin their service with five weeks of basic military training at boot camps. Those performing alternative service are subject to three weeks of basic military training and can choose when to take it, according to the Military Manpower Administration.



AP

Suga, a member of South Korean K-pop band BTS, poses for photographers ahead of a press conference to introduce their new single "Butter" in Seoul, South Korea on May 21, 2021.

It wasn't known in which facility Suga began serving. In a statement earlier this week, BTS's management agency, Bit Hit Music, asked Suga fans to refrain from visiting the signer at his workplace during the period of his service.

"Please convey your warm regards and encouragement in your hearts only," Big Hit Music said. "We ask for your continued love and support for (Suga) until he completes his service and returns."

Last year, intense public debate erupted over whether BTS members should receive special exemptions to their compulsory military duties. But the group's management agency eventually said all seven members would fulfill their obligations.

South Korean law grants exemptions to athletes, classical and traditional musicians, and ballet and other dancers, if they are deemed to have enhanced the country's prestige. K-pop singers aren't eligible for the special dispensation.

British royals sprinkle star power on a grateful French town with up-and-down ties to royalty

SAINT-DENIS, France (AP)—As they do every day at noon, the town hall bells played a cheeky little tune about a king who put his pants on back to front. Perhaps a good thing then, for French-British friendship and all of that, that King Charles III and Queen Camilla arrived a little too late to hear it.

The British royal couple swept into Saint-Denis just after its midday chimes, coming to sprinkle a little of their star power on the town north of Paris that drank up the attention on Thursday.

After all, it's not every day that VIP visitors venture out here—one of the poorest and toughest parts of the Paris region. Residents were thrilled, welcoming the royals as a boost for the town with a reputation for crime, deep pockets of economic hardship, and where many are deprived of the wealth and opportunities that nearby Paris enjoys.

"When people speak of Saint-Denis, they say, 'Oh ! Don't go!,'" said Yannick Caillet, an assistant mayor. "We want to de-stigmatize the town."

Charles and Camilla didn't stay long—roughly an hour. They stuck to Saint-Denis' prettiest parts—around its centuries-old basilica and the adjacent town hall with its quirky bells that twice-daily play tunes linked to France's rich history of insurrection, challenging authority, and dethroning royals.

Heavy downpours in Saint-Denis, metal barriers and the security detail also kept crowds small and largely away from the royal party.

AP

Britain's Queen Camilla, left, French President Emmanuel Macron's wife Brigitte Macron, second left, and Britain' s King Charles III talk to children exercising boxing during a visit to a gymnasium, Thursday, Sept. 21, 2023 in Saint-Denis, outside Paris.

Still, the stop on the second day of their engagement-packed state visit offered Charles and Camilla a quick look at a world far removed from the lavish splendor France treated them to the previous day.

On day one, they got a grand dinner at Versailles Palace with Mick Jagger and actor Hugh Grant among guests, a parade down the Champs-Elysées, a flyover by jets trailing red, white and blue smoke in the Paris sky and lots of attention from French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife, Brigitte.

Macron didn't join the royals in Saint-Denis but Brigitte did. She and Camilla played a bit of table tennis when meeting with kids.

At the Le Khédive cafe, owner Sid Ould-Moussa was told that the king planned to drop by and could he please prepare a table outside, with a chair for Charles—a history and architecture buff—facing the basilica?

"It's excellent for the town, for us," said Ould-Moussa. "It's fabulous."

Inside the cafe, language teachers Corinne Le Mage and Claire Pellistrandi were just tucking into lunches of veal and salmon when the king finally sat down, just a few feet (yards) away, to chat with a group of young job-seekers.

Gulp. The teachers said it would be a meal they'd long remember.

"We're proud for the town," said Le Mage.

"You can feel his sincerity," Pellistrandi added. "It doesn't seem like PR, which is what you generally get with politicians."

Boyfriend candidate quickly reveals his true intentions

DEAR ABBY: I am 36, still single and depressed about it. I recently met someone who seemed perfect. He has his own place with laundry facilities, and his job is the kind where he doesn't have a bunch of other people in his life. So when he asked me over, I went.

I thought because our friends and family were similar, his values would be, too. I expected he would want to get to know me and have a conversation, but he went right for kissing. I'm so disappointed. Then he told me he doesn't want a relationship! Why did he do that? Why do they want to kiss but then not have a relationship? Does he prefer to sit home each night alone and enjoy someone only on Saturdays? What IS that?

I want someone all the time in my life, like a married couple has. My parents are still together. They had a few problems along the way, but they are still together. Why are the men I meet not marriage material?

ON WRONG PATH IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR WRONG PATH: When searching for a relationship, there's more to take into consideration than how nice the man's apartment is, whether it has laundry facilities and how many co-workers he may have at his job. The man you met may have thought you were interested in a hookup because you went to his place without first getting to know him in a neutral setting, as most women do these days.

Where are you meeting these prospects? You might have better luck if you find activities you enjoy where you can meet people of both sexes with whom you share similar interests. If you do, your chances of meeting quality people will increase.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I'm part of a group chat with two dear old friends. We are attorneys with lengthy and distinguished careers. Like so many, we started the chat during the pandemic, when I was living abroad and unable to get back to the U.S. We have continued the chat as we live in different states now. We use it to check in with each other daily or share frustrations, opinions and thoughts on current events and life's challenges.

Recently, one of the women wrote that during her last physical, her doctor recommended a biopsy. Then she said, "I'm not asking for either of you to share your research, opinions or advice just yet. I just wanted to let you know what is going on, and I'll keep you updated as I learn more."

I was upset when I read that statement, especially since she does not hesitate to offer opinions or research of her own. I feel quite over this 20-year friendship. I just don't think that's the way to talk to friends. Do you agree?

PERTURBED IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR PERTURBED: I do NOT agree. "Dear old friends" can say just about anything to each other without them overreacting the way you seem to have. If you felt hurt or slighted by what the woman wrote after learning that she might have a malignancy, pick up the phone and TELL her how you felt and why. But to drop someone at this point would be cruel and uncalled for.

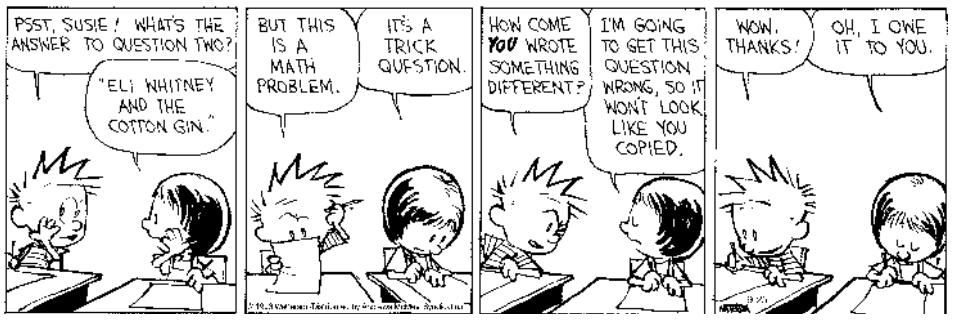
■ ■ ■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

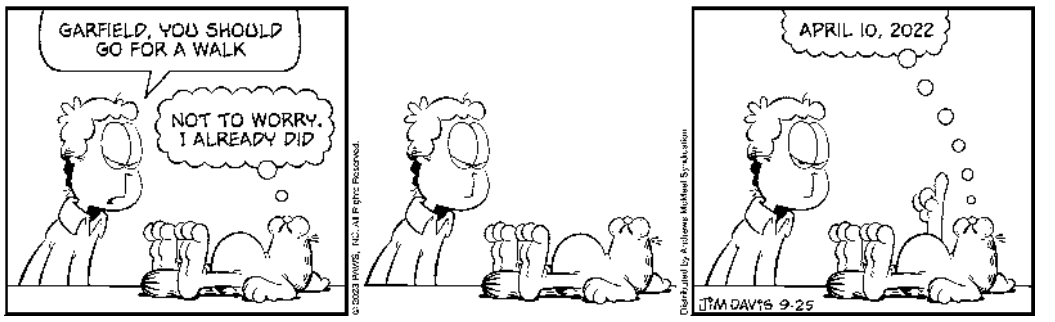
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


PSST, SUSIE! WHAT'S THE ANSWER TO QUESTION TWO?
"ELI WHITNEY AND THE COTTON GIN."
BUT THIS IS A MATH PROBLEM.
IT'S A TRICK QUESTION.
HOW COME YOU WROTE SOMETHING DIFFERENT?
I'M GOING TO GET THIS QUESTION WRONG, SO IT WON'T LOOK LIKE YOU COPIED.
WOW. THANKS!
OH, I OWE IT TO YOU.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

SORRY, YOU CAN'T BUY THIS BEER WITH COUNTERFEIT MONEY.
THIS IS REAL! I JUST GOT PAID TODAY!
YOU MEAN YOUR BOSS IS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO PAY YOU IN REAL MONEY?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Flightless bird
4 Mac rivals
7 Beach crawler
11 Chinese dynasty
13 Stetson, e.g.
14 "Today" co-host Kotb
15 Israel's Golda
16 Bruins legend
17 Detail
18 Ear bone
20 Bath powder
22 Last letter in London
24 Otter's kin
28 Making fun of
32 Limber
33 Autobahn auto
34 Fitting rhyme for "spa"
36 Medical suffix
37 Streep of "The Post"
39 Hotel areas
41 Investigations
43 Golf peg
44 Wax-coated cheese
46 Garish
50 Coffee
53 Fish story
55 Actress Perlman
56 Mideast ruler
57 Santa's helper
58 Doomed
59 Faucets
60 Yoga pad
61 Uplands, for short

DOWN

1 Tennis star Raducanu
2 Carriage
3 Princeton or Yale (Abbr.)
4 Saigon soup
5 Shopper's aid
6 Milkshake insert
7 NFL team from Illinois
8 Decay
9 Citric beverage
10 "Kapow!"
12 Yellowstone denizens
19 Floral garland
21 Grazing land
23 "CSI" evidence
25 Spanish ayes
26 Writer Wiesel
27 Minus
28 Easy win
29 Copycat
30 Goose egg
31 Lass
35 Sizzling
38 Went first
40 Plead
42 Witch trial town
45 Actress Kunis
47 "Nope!"
48 Mar on a car
49 Talks nonstop
50 Lustrous black
51 "I — Rock"
52 Big shot
54 Newt

Solution time: 21 mins.

U	N	C	L	E	■	L	A	S	■	S	R	S
N	O	S	I	R	■	A	P	T	■	P	H	I
O	G	L	E	R	■	I	S	E	L	I	O	I
■	■	E	V	O	L	V	E	■	E	T	N	A
D	O	W	■	R	E	I	■	L	A	S	E	R
E	L	I	S	■	A	A	∩	C	N	■	■	■
V	E	S	P	A	S	■	I	N	T	E	N	T
■	■	■	A	R	E	A	S	■	O	G	I	E
A	V	E	R	T	■	L	E	W	■	W	A	D
M	I	N	T	■	P	A	R	I	S	H	■	■
P	D	J	A	M	E	S	■	C	L	I	A	S
I	A	O	■	Γ	Γ	K	■	I	O	T	T	O
E	L	Y	■	T	R	A	■	D	E	E	M	S

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	3	■	■	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	10
11			12	■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			■	17			
18				19	■	20		21		■	■	■
■	■	■	22		23	■	24			25	26	27
28	29	30				31	■	32				
33				■	34		35	■	36			
37				38	■	39		40				
41					42	■	43			■	■	■
■	■	■	44			45	■	46		47	48	49
50	51	52		■	53		54	■	55			
56				■	57			■	58			
59				■	60			■	61			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Donald Glover Jr., 40; Catherine Zeta-Jones, 54; Will Smith, 55; Michael Douglas, 79.

Happy Birthday: Take control; it's up to you to start the ball rolling. Use your imagination and let your passion to succeed drive you to the finish line. Refuse to be caught up in someone else's dreams. Think big, but don't lose sight of taking a minimalist approach when making a move. Trust your instincts and enjoy the ride. Your numbers are 2, 8, 14, 26, 31, 33, 46.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* You'll resonate with people who are excited and ready to act. Do your part and you'll gain respect from others. Set high standards and live up to your expectations, and something good will come your way. Romance looks promising. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take care of yourself. Don't let temptation turn into a costly affair. Put emotions aside and offer what's tangible. It's not up to you to save the world. Do your part, but not at the expense of putting what's important to you on hold. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Do your thing. Present what you have to offer and step into a leadership role if it will help you get things done your way. A positive change at home will encourage gratitude and better relationships with loved ones. Say no to emotional manipulation. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Problems will surface at home or with someone if you don't communicate openly. Map out your thoughts and be honest about what's important to you. If you find individuals moving in a similar direction, you will discover who you can count on for help. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Not all offers are equal. Listen, evaluate and head in a direction that touches on the people, places and situations that matter. There is only so much time in a day; don't waste it on people who demand a lot for small returns. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Use your wisdom and experience to bring about positive change. Removing yourself from situations that are not beneficial will help you restart your path in a positive direction. Change begins with you. Don't hesitate to make the first move. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Consider what and who is important to you and do your best to make a difference. Don't feel like you must take on more than you can handle. Set boundaries and offer what's realistic. A personal pick-me-up will boost your confidence and energy. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Step outside your comfort zone, pay attention to what's happening and speak up. Don't fold under pressure or give in to someone's rhetoric. It's up to you to develop your beliefs. Don't let emotions cloud your vision. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Keep channels of communication open. The information you receive will require verification. Pay attention to your actions; you will face opposition if you are too aggressive or exaggerate. A frugal lifestyle will deter scammers from taking advantage of you. Put yourself first. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Take note to avoid confusion or getting less than you deserve. Pay attention to where your money goes and who has access to your possessions. Joint ventures are not favored and can disrupt a relationship if not handled with care. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take hold of whatever situation unfolds. Don't let anyone outmaneuver you. A change someone makes midstream may sound good, but a closer look will give you a reason to pull out of a deal. Haste will lead to poor decisions and heated discussions. Pay attention. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* You can dream, but when the time is right, don't hesitate to make a move. Opportunity is apparent. Going directly to the source will help you make a decision that puts your mind at ease. Look for better ways to secure money for retirement. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, energetic and helpful. You are demonstrative and entertaining.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	9			6	7	2	4	
	5	1		9	3	6	8	7
6	4			2			1	3
7		9	2					1
	8	2						6
		4		8				
	7		6				2	
	1	5	9		2	3		4
4	2		5					9

Difficulty: ★ 9/25

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

1	2	6	3	7	4	8	5	9
5	8	3	6	2	9	1	4	7
7	4	9	1	5	8	2	6	3
9	6	7	4	1	5	3	2	8
8	5	1	7	3	2	6	9	4
4	3	2	9	8	6	5	7	1
2	9	5	8	4	3	7	1	6
3	7	4	2	6	1	9	8	5
6	1	8	5	9	7	4	3	2

Difficulty: ★★★★ 9/21

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SNAKE HANDLERS Solution: 8 letters

P	H	T	N	E	Ⓟ	R	E	S	E	R	V	I	C	E
P	E	O	C	H	Ⓡ	I	S	T	I	A	N	C	P	N
L	A	N	L	I	Ⓐ	N	I	L	O	R	A	C	O	N
A	C	S	T	I	Ⓨ	G	G	Z	M	A	S	S	W	A
C	H	U	T	E	N	H	N	R	O	O	I	S	E	I
I	A	P	R	O	C	E	S	S	I	O	N	M	R	H
L	R	R	R	A	R	O	S	H	P	T	S	E	T	C
E	I	L	E	E	G	A	S	S	E	M	E	G	V	A
G	S	T	A	L	A	F	A	T	E	C	N	A	D	L
N	M	T	N	E	I	C	N	A	A	E	T	E	S	A
A	A	R	A	R	H	G	H	C	R	L	S	E	A	P
V	T	P	E	T	S	M	I	T	H	E	E	R	X	P
E	I	L	A	R	U	R	S	O	R	A	W	F	E	A
H	C	R	U	H	C	E	S	I	N	G	N	S	T	V
B	I	B	L	E	K	A	N	S	E	L	T	T	A	R

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Ancient, Appalachian, Bible, Carolina, Chant, Charismatic, Christian, Church, Dance, Evangelical, Fire, Free, Gems, Heal, Holiness, Mass, Message, Pastor, Pentecostal, Pets, Poison, Power, Pray, Preach, Procession, Rattlesnake, Religion, Ring, Rite, Ritual, Rural, Serpent, Service, Signs, Sing, Statue, Strength, Teach, Texas, Venom, Verse, West, Zoos

Last Friday's Answer: Capers

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

McCaffrey, 49ers win 13th straight in the regular season, beat the Giants, 30-12

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—The New York Giants kept dialing up blitzes and the San Francisco 49ers just got the ball into their playmakers' hands.

Christian McCaffrey scored a touchdown in his 12th straight game, Deebo Samuel caught one of Brock Purdy's two TD passes and the San Francisco 49ers won their 13th straight regular season game, 30-12 over the New York Giants on Thursday night.

"They got a good bit of pressure on Brock and caused a couple of three-and-outs but it's about how long you can sustain doing that," Samuel said. "So in the second half we came out executing."

The Niners weren't particularly sharp on offense early in their home opener but got enough from McCaffrey and on big runs after the catch by Samuel and George Kittle to earn their second 3-0 start in 25 seasons.

The Giants blitzed Purdy on 33 of his 39 dropbacks, according to NFL NextGen stats, and he capitalized with 247 of his 310 yards passing on those plays, including the touchdowns to rookie Ronnie Bell and Samuel.

"I thought it was just a huge challenge, one of the bigger ones Brock has been in with a short week to prepare for a scheme like that," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "There's not a comfortable play throughout the game. ... I thought he settled down as the game went on."

McCaffrey ran for 85 yards, added 34 more receiving and scored on a 4-yard run that made it 17-3 late in the second quarter. That matched Jerry Rice's franchise record with 12 straight games in the regular season or playoffs with a TD and is three shy of the NFL mark.

The defense did the rest against the short-handed Giants (1-2), who fell behind by double digits at the half for the third time in three games this season.

AP

San Francisco 49ers running back Christian McCaffrey, right, runs against New York Giants cornerback Adoree' Jackson during the second half of an NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif., Thursday, Sept. 21, 2023

With the running game hampered by the absence of injured star Saquon Barkley and the offensive line overmatched without left tackle Andrew Thomas and left guard Ben Bredeson, the Giants struggled to move the ball and finished with 150 yards of offense.

"No excuses with anybody who missed the game or who played," coach Brian Daboll said.

They managed two field goals in the first half and scored on Matt Breida's 8-yard run on a third-quarter drive that needed just 15 yards thanks to two penalties on the Niners.

Daniel Jones was often on the run and couldn't get anything going downfield. He went 22 for 32 for 137 yards and an interception.

"We didn't create a rhythm," Jones said. "We didn't execute, didn't take advantage of our opportunities, That's a good defense, a good team and when you are playing good teams you can't afford to do that. We didn't play well enough."

Purdy was off target in the first half but his numbers were pretty good thanks to some fortunate bounces and help from his teammates. Kittle broke up a potential interception on the opening drive and Purdy had another pass to Samuel that got deflected and bounced high in the air before Bell caught it for a 15-yard gain.

Purdy also converted a third-and-15 and third-and-13 on the same drive by throwing quick passes behind the line of scrimmage that Samuel and McCaffrey turned into first downs.

The Giants once again found themselves in a big hole at halftime, trailing 17-6. It was an improvement from the first two weeks when they trailed Dallas 26-0 in the opener and Arizona 20-0 in Week 2. They rallied to beat the Cardinals with a strong second half.

New York also got down 28-0 in a playoff loss last season to the Eagles, marking the first time since 2003-04 that they trailed by double digits at the half in four straight games.

There was a small scuffle late in the first half when the Niners were trying to take a knee to run out the clock. San Francisco left tackle Trent Williams took offense when New York's A'Shawn Robinson shoved Aaron Banks and Williams shoved him with two hands. Robinson appeared to throw a jab toward Williams, who then responded with a punch to the facemask.

Offsetting penalties were called but Williams was not ejected.

"We ended up looking at the video we had available to us, and we just didn't see anything that rose to the level of flagrant, which is the standard that we have to apply to disqualify the player," NFL Senior Vice President of Officiating Walt Anderson told a pool reporter.

Jets' Rodgers focused on getting healthy, playing again but won't put timeline on return

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP)—Aaron Rodgers misses being around his New York Jets teammates and feels a bit isolated at times as he recovers from surgery on his torn left Achilles tendon.

"It's like the reverse darkness retreat," the star quarterback said with a laugh during an appearance Friday on "The Pat McAfee Show." "Nothing around except for light all the time."

Rodgers was injured on his fourth snap in his debut with the Jets on Sept. 11 against the Buffalo Bills. He had surgery two days later and has been going through the rehabilitation process since.

During his appearance on the show last week, the 39-year-old Rodgers spoke of using the doubters and people's theoretical timelines to recover as motivation. While there had been some talk as to whether Rodgers might even consider retiring, the four-time NFL MVP indicated last week he wanted to continue his playing career—perhaps maybe even as soon as later this season.

He reiterated his desire to play again with some more clarity Friday.

"I don't want to get caught in the timeline," Rodgers said. "I just want to get healthy, honestly, mentally and physically, honestly. But I'm going to do everything I can rehab-wise, to put myself in a position to be ready to play football again at some point. That's the goal. I mean, obviously when this happened, there's a lot of thoughts about, like, is that it? Cash it in, you're done?

"I just don't feel like I am. So I'm going to put myself in a position to be able to play again and then see when that is."

Rodgers said he has visualized being able to someday run out of the tunnel at the stadium and back onto the football field "to do exactly what I love."

Rodgers spent the last two weekends watching NFL games, including Green Bay—his team for 18 years—beating the Bears 38-20 in Chicago in Week 1—the day before he was injured.

AP

New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers (8) warms up before playing against the Buffalo Bills in an NFL football game, Monday, Sept. 11, 2023, in East Rutherford, N.J.

Rodgers, who has called Soldier Field his "second home" and told Bears fans he still "owns" them, sent Packers quarterback Jordan Love a text after that game.

"Congrats for keeping the ownership in place," Rodgers said he told Love.

Rodgers also watched New York's 30-10 loss to Dallas last Sunday.

"It's been tough," Rodgers said during the video call in the middle of a rehab session. "Every single day, it's tough not to be with the guys, even when they check in or I hear from coaches or whatever. It's great, but it's also disappointing not to be out there. I've been grinding on the rehab and just looking forward to getting back out to Jersey at some point."

Earlier Friday, Jets coach Robert Saleh said the team was hoping Rodgers might be able to be back at the facility sometime next week if he's able to do so.

"Yeah, I'd like to be able to walk," Rodgers said. "So whenever I can walk, I'll probably be back in Jersey. I miss the guys."

Rodgers said he has watched "Kobe Bryant's Muse," the 2015 documentary about the late Basketball Hall of Famer's career—including his return from his own torn Achilles tendon. Rodgers used the same doctor who performed the surgery on Bryant, Dr. Neal ElAttrache.

Marlins prevent Brewers from clinching NL Central with 5-4 win

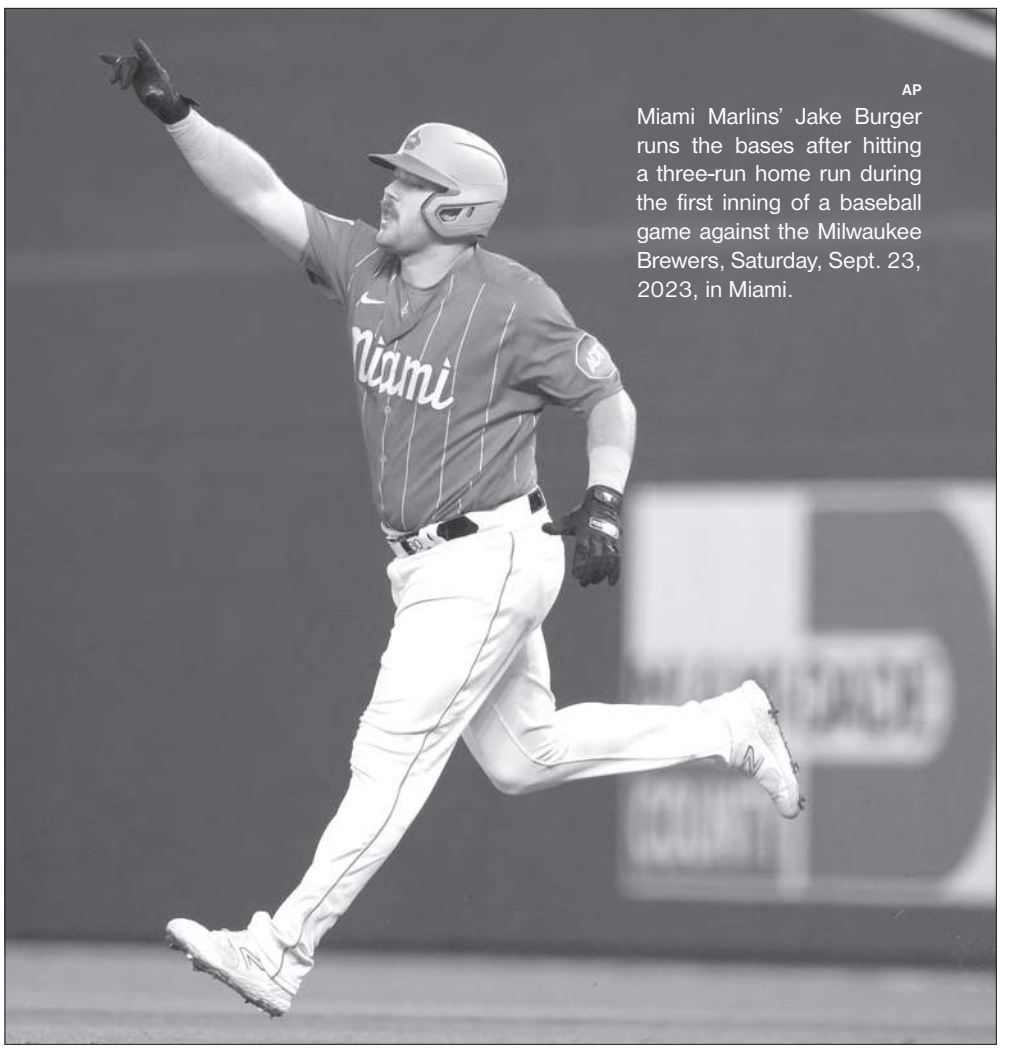
MIAMI (AP)—Jake Burger hit a three-run homer, the Marlins scored the tie-breaking run in the eighth inning and Miami beat Milwaukee 5-4 on Saturday to stay within a game of the Cubs for the third NL wild card and prevent the Brewers from clinching the NL Central.

Pinch runner Garrett Hampson scored the winning run on a wild pitch by Brewers reliever Joel Payamps (6-5) in the eighth.

Miami's Luis Arraez went 1-for-5 and his major league-leading batting average dropped to .353, while Carlos Santana hit his career 300th homer for Milwaukee.

Andrew Nardi (8-1) pitched a scoreless eighth and Tanner Scott closed with a perfect ninth for his 10th save.

Milwaukee starter Brandon Woodruffwas lifted after five innings. The right-hander gave up four runs, six hits, struck out six and walked two.



AP

Miami Marlins' Jake Burger runs the bases after hitting a three-run home run during the first inning of a baseball game against the Milwaukee Brewers, Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023, in Miami.

ORIOLES 2, GUARDIANS 1

CLEVELAND (AP)—John Means carried a no-hit bid into the seventh inning and Anthony Santander drove in a pair of runs, sending AL East-leading Baltimore over Cleveland.

Means, a 30-year-old left-hander, was making his third start in 17 months following Tommy John surgery. Cleveland's only hit—and lone hard-hit ball—occurred when Andrés Giménez pulled a change-up to right for a 406-foot homer.

Baltimore maintained a 1 1/2-game lead over second-place Tampa Bay in the division and for the best record in the AL.

Means (1-1) allowed three baserunners in 7 1/3 innings on a walk, hit batter and Giménez's home run. He threw a season-high 96 pitches and struck out four. Yennier Cano retired both batters he faced in the eighth, and Cionel Pérez worked the ninth for his third save.

Guardians starter Cal Quantrill (3-7) allowed one run, five hits and a season-high four walks in four innings. The right-hander struck out four and has a 1.95 ERA in five September outings.

DODGERS 7, GIANTS 0

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Clayton Kershaw pitched two-hit ball over five innings, Mookie Betts hit a two-run double that set a record of 105 RBIs for a leadoff hitter, and Los Angeles earned its 95th win of the season and 15th shutout, tied for second in the major leagues.

Kershaw (13-4) struck out five and walked two. The three-time Cy Young Award winner has not gone beyond five innings in any of last seven starts.

Betts' RBIs are the most by a leadoff hitter, two more than Charlie Blackmon's 103 for Colorado in 2017. Betts' double in the eighth extended the lead to 7-0.

Giants opener John Brebbia (3-2) took the loss, pitching 1 1/3 innings.

RAYS 7, BLUE JAYS 6

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Josh Lowe hit a three-run homer and a walk-off single that capped a two-run ninth inning, lifting Tampa Bay over Toronto after the Rays wasted a five-run lead.

Rays starter Zack Littell took a shutout in the sixth but was pulled after the Blue Jays put two runners on with two outs due to Curtis Mead's throwing error at third and a wild pitch on a strikeout.

Shawn Armstrong entered and gave up four straight hits. Chris Devenski (5-4), Tampa Bays' sixth pitcher, was credited with the win.

Jordan Romano (5-6), Toronto's sixth pitcher, blew a save for the fourth time in 40 chances.

RANGERS 2, MARINERS 0

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Jordan Montgomery pitched seven scoreless innings, switch-hitting All-Star catcher Jonah Heim drove in a run and AL West-leading Texas blanked Seattle.

Montgomery (10-11) struck out six and walked two while scattering five hits. He is 4-2 in his 10 starts for the Rangers.

Jose Leclerc and Aroldis Chapman finished off the Rangers' 12th shutout of the season. Leclerc pitched the eighth and gave up a one-out single in the ninth before the hard-throwing Chapman worked around a walk for his sixth save in 11 chances.

Mariners starter Logan Gilbert (13-7) allowed two runs on five hits over 5 2/3 innings, with two strikeouts and four walks.

All-Star slugger Adolis García, in his fifth game back after missing 10 games with a patellar tendon strain in his right knee, scored both Rangers runs.

PHILLIES 7, METS 5

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bryce Harper sparked Philadelphia's comeback from a two-run deficit by reaching 20 homers for the ninth time, leading the Phillies to their fourth straight win.

Harper had three RBIs for the defending NL champions (86-69), who are closing in on an NL wild card berth. Alec Bohm also homered as the Phillies, who opened a four-game lead over Arizona for the top wild card.

Philadelphia would clinch a playoff berth Sunday with a win and a loss by either the Chicago Cubs or Miami Marlins. The Phillies have not reached the playoffs in successive seasons since a five-year stretch from 2007-11.

Zack Wheeler (13-6) improved to 4-0 in his last six starts, allowing five runs—three earned—and eight hits in seven innings. José Alvarado pitched a perfect ninth for his 10th save in 12 chances.

Mets starter José Quintana (3-6) gave up six runs—five earned runs—and eight hits in six innings with a season-high 10 strikeouts.

ROYALS 3, ASTROS 2

HOUSTON (AP)—Jordan Lyles gave up just two hits in five innings, Bobby Witt Jr. drove in his 93rd run of the season and Kansas City won nine of its last 10 games.

Houston has lost four of its last five games and fell to 39-41 at home this year. Still, the Astros maintained their half-game lead for the final AL wild-card spot over Seattle with seven games remaining.

Lyles (5-17) held the Astros to just one hit through the first four innings, while striking out three and walking two.

Taylor Clarke got the last five outs for his third save of the season.

Astros starter J.P. France (11-6) gave up three runs and seven hits in five innings, walking one and striking out five.

Astros reliever Bryan Abreu struck out the side in the eighth inning to extend his scoreless innings streak to a major league-best 24 innings. Abreu has struck out 28 batters in this span.

ANGELS 1, TWINS 0

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Jo Adell homered, Kenny Rosenberg outpitched Sonny Gray and Los Angeles beat Minnesota, a day after the Twins clinched the AL Central title.

Rosenberg (2-2), a 28-year-old left-hander making his fourth big league start and ninth appearance, allowed five hits and two walks in five innings with five strikeouts. Carlos Estévez, the Angels' fourth reliever, hit Kyle Farmer with a pitch starting the ninth, then got three straight outs for his 31st save in 35 chances.

Gray (8-8) allowed a fourth-inning homer to Adell on a first-pitch sinker, just the eighth home run off Gray this season. He gave up four hits in six innings and struck out eight.

Los Angeles (70-85), assured of its eighth straight losing season, won for just the second time in nine games.

CUBS 6, ROCKIES 3

CHICAGO (AP)—Cody Bellinger hit a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the seventh inning, and Chicago topped Colorado to improve its position in the NL wild-card standings.

Led by a solid performance from its bullpen, Chicago earned its second straight win after a stretch of seven losses in eight games. It moved within a half-game of Arizona for the second NL wild card and ensured it would hold onto sole possession of the third spot for at least another day.

Colorado wasted a solid performance by Chris Flexen, who pitched five innings of two-run ball. After Nick Mears (0-1) began the seventh with three straight walks on 13 pitches, Bellinger put Chicago in front when he greeted Justin Lawrence with a fly ball to the warning track in left.

Marcus Stroman pitched three innings of three-run ball for the Cubs in his first start since July 31. After Stroman departed, Javier Assad (5-3) struck out six in four scoreless innings. Julian Merryweather escaped a bases-loaded jam in the eighth, and José Cuas worked the ninth for his second big league save.

CARDINALS 5, PADRES 2, 11 INNINGS

SAN DIEGO (AP)—The Padres matched the expansion 1969 Montreal Expos as the only teams to go 0-12 in extra innings as St. Louis ended San Diego's season-high, eight-game winning streak.

Richie Palacios and Andrew Knizner hit sacrifice flies in the 11th inning around Luken Baker's run-scoring single off Scott Barlow (3-5).

San Diego dropped five games behind the Chicago Cubs for the NL's last wild card with seven games left.

Casey Lawrence (1-0), a 35-year-old right-hander, pitched two hitless innings for his first major league win since Sept. 19, 2018, for Seattle at Houston. Seven pitchers combined on six-hit ball, holding the Padres to 1 for 17 with runners in scoring position.

St. Louis pitchers walked 12 and Padres pitchers walked seven.

WHITE SOX 1, RED SOX 0

BOSTON (AP)—Luis Robert Jr. hit a 311-foot home run just beyond the Pesky Pole to break a scoreless, ninth-inning tie, and Dylan Cease struck out 11 in seven shutout innings to lead Chicago over Boston.

Playing in a steady rain, with the wind blowing in at 10 mph, Cease and Boston starter Nick Pivetta matched scoreless innings before both departed after seven.

Aaron Bummer (5-5) pitched the eighth, walking the first two batters before escaping. Bryan Shaw got the last three outs for his third save.

Josh Winckowski (4-3) struck out three after relieving Pivetta, allowing two hits, including the curling line drive that found the first row of seats—just beyond the foul pole that is 302 feet from home plate.

PIRATES 13, REDS 12

CINCINNATI (AP)—Pittsburgh overcame a nine-run deficit for the first time in its 133-season history as Luis Rivas tied a career-high with five RBIs, dealing a staggering blow to Cincinnati's playoff hopes.

Cincinnati, which dropped 2 1/2 games back for the NL's last wild card berth, opened a 9-0 lead with three runs in the first, five in the second and one in the third, then allowed 13 unanswered runs.

Reds rookie Christian Encarnacion-Strand, Tyler Stephenson and TJ Friedl all homered off Bailey Fatter, who allowed eight runs and nine hits in two innings.

On a night each team had 16 hits, José Hernández (1-1) got the final out of the seventh in his first major league win.

Reds closer Alexis Díaz (9-6) took the loss.

ATHLETICS 4, TIGERS 1

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Joe Boyle had five strikeouts in six innings for his first career win, Esteury Ruiz hit a two-run home run, and Oakland beat Detroit.

Boyle (1-0) was mostly crisp in his second start in the majors. The rookie allowed five hits, pitched around traffic in each of the first six innings and gave up an unearned run in the third, the only runner Boyle allowed past second base.

Trevor May got the final four outs, pitching out of a bases-loaded jams in the eighth, for his 20th save.

Miguel Díaz, working as the Tigers opener for the third time in five days, retired four of the five batters he faced and walked one. Reliever Joey Wentz (3-12) pitched 5 2/3 innings, allowing two runs and striking out five.

Calling ballers to join Sept. pre-series tourney

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation is hosting a September pre-series tournament in preparation of the Marianas 3x3 Basketball Series.

The proposed dates for the pre-series are Sept. 28 and 29 at 5:30pm and Sept. 30 at 9am at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It is an open division for both men and women teams.

The goal of the pre-series tournament is to have all teams and players be familiarized with the format, rules and regulations, and how the 3x3 series is conducted. This is an exhibition only to help prepare teams and players and is not counted toward the actual Marianas 3x3 Series.

Teams for this tournament can be temporary but the teams registered for the actual Marianas 3x3 Series cannot be changed after the start of the October tournament.

Registration is free and waiver forms are due on Sept. 25 at 6pm. It is based on a first come, first serve basis.

Scan the QR code to sign up or click on this link: https://forms.gle/DHGRVr33p3EfvHFs5

For more information, contact (670)-287-3103 or email nmibasketballfederation@gmail.com.

Rules and regulations

All games will be played under FIBA 3x3 rules and regulations.

Players must be a U.S. citizen, aged 18 years or older, (born in or after 2005).

All players must be registered at https://play.fiba3x3.com with a confirmed account. Only players registered with a confirmed account are eligible to play.

Teams must identify a team captain and each team is required to submit a four-person roster. Only players who have duly registered are entitled to participate in the competition. No uniform, no play. No coach may be present on the playing courts and no coaching is allowed.

Competition format is a single round-robin knockout round: Top 4 teams for men and Top 2 teams from women advance from each pool; single elimination—no points will be given to any teams in this tournament and will not count towards the Marianas 3x3 Series.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The Northern Mariana Islands Basketball Federation will organize a 3x3 pre-series tournament on Sept. 28, 29, and 30 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Body camera footage shows Altman told he nearly caused accident

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers general manager Koby Altman speaks during a news conference at the NBA basketball team's training facility in Independence, Ohio, Friday, July 30, 2021.

CLEVELAND (AP)—Body camera footage of Cavaliers executive Koby Altman undergoing field sobriety tests shows him being told by officers that he nearly caused an accident last week before he was arrested and charged with driving while impaired.

On Wednesday, the Cavaliers issued a new statement about their president of basketball operations, who was arrested Friday night near downtown Cleveland. Altman was first stopped by Ohio State Highway Patrol officers for a traffic violation before refusing a breath test and being taken into custody.

The team released a brief initial statement a day after Altman's arrest. It followed up with more comment a day after the bodycam video emerged and Altman pleaded not guilty through his attorney in court.

"We hold our team members to a high standard of conduct and expect leaders at every level of our organization to represent the Cavaliers with integrity, professionalism and accountability," the team said. "We will continue to closely monitor the facts and circumstances of this matter and await resolution of the legal process."

It's not known if Altman has been disciplined by the team.

Although the 41-year-old Altman refused to take a breath test on the scene, the officers noted in their report that he was "respectful and cooperative."

In the bodycam footage, an officer tells Altman he nearly caused an accident and asks him if he knows how fast he was driving. Altman responds by saying he had driven the route before and wasn't breaking the speed limit.

CARMELITA

From page 20

Donald's gift certificate.

The boat *Zephyr,* captained by Stephen Pixley and crew Rex Pixley and Jason Pixley won them $750 and a 20-qt. ice chest from Triple J, a $25 gift certificate from carquest, a $25 gift certificate from Joeten Motors, and a $25 from The Hut and McDonald's. They caught a total of 39.4 lbs from a 38.2-lb wahoo and a 1.2-lb katsu.

Fifth place went to *Ruby Fishing,* captained by Nicholas Wedell who caught a total of 32.7 lbs from a 15.2-lb yellowfin and 17.5-lb wahoo. They won $500, a 20-qt. ice chest from Triple J, a $25 gift certificate from Carquest, a $25 gift certificate from Joeten Motors, and a $25 gift certificate from The Hut and McDonald's.

Sixth place went to *Sesa* captained by Takede Nakazata and crew Frank Pai and Kevin Diaz. They caught a 23.6-lb yellowfin and 5.2-lb mahi for a total weight of 28.8 lbs.

The Top 5 in the 2022 Mix Classic also took home trophies.

Gene Weaver, president of TTT, said that the turnout was good considering it was postponed twice due to small craft warnings.

When the tournament pushed through last Saturday, he said, "the conditions were great. A lot of fish were caught and I'm just happy we got this tournament on the way and we didn't have to postpone it again." He added, "there was some weather service out there but we crossed our fingers and we made it happen."

Weaver said of the tournament, "It was challenging—not everyone caught, but hey, I heard everything was caught in the morning and not that much in the afternoon."

He added that all 23 boats came back safely, "So that makes it a successful tournament."

Proceeds from the tournament benefit the 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation of TTT Inc. to support its continued mission for the youth programs spearheaded by TTT Inc. with the CNMI Public School System.

The TTT Mix Classic Fishing Tournament is a new tournament focusing on targeted pelagic fish species. However, in order to qualify your catch, submitting captain/anglers catch must include a combination of the qualifying pelagic species.

The qualifying pelagic species are as follows: billfish, yellowfin tuna, wahoo, mahi mahi, and skipjack tuna.

The main event sponsors were ITE, IPE, Fishing Tackle and Sporting Goods, Marianas Visitors Authority, and MARPAC.

The derby shirt design and creation sponsor was Roil Soil and the other sponsors and in-kind donors were API Carquest, Saipan Ice and Water, Napa Auto and Truck Parts, The Hut, UR Tents, FJR Inc., Triple J Saipan, Inc., McDonald's, Peska Tackle, Herman's Modern Bakery, Skydive Saipan, and Joeten Motors.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Carmelita II's Carmelita Castro, left, and Jeremy Koshiro pose with the boat's catch, a 104.5-lb marlin and 15.6-lb yellowfin. With a total weight of 120.10 pounds, *Carmelita II* took home first place and defended their title and also won the $750 side bet for heaviest fish at the 2nd Annual Tasi To Table Mix Classic, last Saturday at the Smiling Cove Marina.

O'SULLIVAN

From page 20

The 39-year-old O'Sullivan, who just came to the island about two weeks ago, said the course was tough, especially on the first hill.

"I thought it'd be fine because you're coming down for the second but you're only coming down for a little bit and then you're just kind of up and down again as you do the circuit around. Like the only easy bit was when I saw this turn here (near the finish line), so I can kind of push on for the last bit."

It was his first time running the course and said that he actually ran a marathon prior and was sore running the 5K.

For Chavez, this was one of the first few Run Saipan races she's joined and also said that the course was tough. "It's really and then downhill so your speed changes and like your thighs get heavy, but yeah, it was good."

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said of this year's race, "It's a great course. It has a little bit of everything: incline, decline, grass, road and gravel. This was Dr. Ron [Snyder's] suggestion for this year and I'm very glad we made it happen." Dela Cruz said that this is one race with a course rotation as the first one was at Ladder Beach and the second one was at Tank Beach.

As for next year's course, he said he will be speaking with Salty Skin Pacific's Joe Villacrusis to see if they will do a course at the new Route 36. "We will probably start at Route 36 and run toward Kingfisher [Golf Links] to keep the incline but we will see."

The race was in partnership with Villacrusis and Salty Skin Pacific and Dela Cruz said that the partnership is still going strong.

"I'm very thankful to Joe and Salty Skin Pacific because our partnership was since the underground Run Saipan days and they were one of our very first supporters. This year we didn't have prizes because we saved those for beach cleanup incentives."

Dela Cruz then thanked everyone who made the event possible. "Thank you to our sponsor Salty Skin Pacific for continuing our partnership for another year! Thank you, Joseph Villacrusis, for making this happen again. We look forward to the 4th installment next year. Thanks to Northern Marianas Athletics, Saipan International School, *Marianas Variety, Saipan Tribune*, Run Saipan officials and Marianas High School National Honor Society, and Mr. Lao Zhang."

CHECKPOINT

From page 20

a team-high 24 points, but it wasn't enough to catch up to Checkpoints' lead.

Arjay Giron wasn't far behind Morales as he went for 22 markers himself. Brian Natividad added 12 points, but with the rest of the team's less than stellar performance, Checkpoint slipped easily past them.

By the end of the game, Dela Cruz put up 29 markers, while Santos had 25, and Tony Kim contributed 22 points. Two others—Gab Camacho and Carlo Castillo made it to double digits with 12 apiece.

The other game that night was between the Winners Group and Homesmart, with the winner sticking true to its namesake with an 84-75 win.

In other results last Friday, Priority Care slipped past Loving Hands, 85-81.

Last Wednesday, CK Saints bested Vik Team, 74-57; and Legends blew Long Shot out of the court, 70-42.

Last Tuesday, Choju defeated 670 Rollers, 97-62; A Plus Team overpowered Gualo Rai Warriors-Win Pacific, 95-68.

Results of Saturday's games and Sunday's make-up games will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

After the dragged-out season due to rain delays, make-up games are scheduled until Monday. Oct. 2. When all make-up games are completed, the schedule will soon follow for the playoffs.

Checkpoint 118 – Dela Cruz 29, K. Santos 25, Kim 22, G. Camacho 12, Castillo 12, Esmores 9, Agustin 5, J. Camacho 4.

IT&E 79 – Morales 24, Giron 22, Brian Natividad 12, Billy Natividad 6, Macaraig 6, Pineda 5, Jose 2, Divinagracia 2.

Scoring by quarters: 29-11, 55-27, 89-44, 118-79.

McCaffrey, 49ers win 13th straight in the regular season, beat the Giants, 30-12.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Calling ballers to join Sept. pre-series tourney.

PAGE 19

Carmelita II defends Mix Classic title

LEIGH GASES

Tasi To Table president Gene Weaver, far left, poses with defending champions *Carmelita II* and crew, including Jeremy Koshiro, third from left, and Carmelita Castro, third from right, during the awards ceremony of the 2nd Annual TTT Mix Classic Fishing Tournament last Saturday at the Smiling Cove Marina.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Carmelita II held its own against 22 other boats and defended their title in the Tasi To Table Inc.'s 2nd Mix Classic Fishing Tournament held last Saturday in the waters off the CNMI.

Owned and captained by Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro, its crew included Alexandro Castro Jr., Carmelita Castro, Khalia Castro, and Jeremy Koshiro—who caught a total of 120.1 lbs of eligible fish that included a 104.5-lb marlin and a 15.6-lb yellowfin.

Their catch won them the $3,000 top purse, an inflatable emergency boat, a 65-qt. ice chest from Triple J, a 5-gallon bucket from YCO Hardware, a $150 gift certificate from Napa Auto Parts, a$100 gift certificate from Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods, a $50 gift certificate from Peska Tackle and Lure, a $25 gift certificate from The Hut and McDonald's, and another year's worth of bragging rights.

Along with this, *Carmelita II* hauled in the heaviest catch of the tournament to win the side bet of $750.

Second place was *Kokas* captained by Manny Sablan with crew Will Dela Cruz and Robert Tenorio. Their total 55-lb catch of a 32.4-lb yellowfin and 22.6-lb wahoo won them $2,000, a 45-qt. ice chest from Triple J, a $100 gift certificate from FTSG, a $150 gift certificate from NAPA, a $50 gift certificate from Peska Tackle and lure, a $25 gift certificate from Carquest, a $45 gift certificate from The Hut, and a McDonald's gift certificate.

Third place went to *Sea Nanamu* captained by Shaun Pua with crew Giovanni Mira and Cody Norita. They caught a total of 43.3 lbs with an 18.9-lb yellowfin and a 24.4-lb wahoo. Their winnings included $1,000, a 45-qt. ice chest from Triple J, a $100 gift certificate from FTSG, a $25 gift certificate from Joeten/Carquest/The Hut, and a Mc-

See CARMELITA on Page 19

O'Sullivan, Chavez rule Salty Skin 5K

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Newcomer Jodie O'Sullivan and student multi-sport athlete Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez outpaced a little over 50 runners in the new course of the 3rd Annual Run Saipan & Salty Skin Pacific 5K last Friday.

With the hills, sunkissed sky, and salty sunset air of the Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park in Puerto Rico, O'Sullivan made the course his own as he came in first overall with a time of 18:49.07. Second place was Agape Christian School's Samuel Zhu at 19:01.15; and third was Sildrey Veloria at 19:14.36.

In the women's division, Chavez topped it at 21:55.76; second was Addalee Taflinger at 24:42.20; and third was Ann Bang with a time of 25:10.44.

See O'SULLIVAN on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

From left, standing on bench, third place of the men's division in the 3rd Annual Run Saipan Salty Skin Pacific 5K, Sildrey Veloria, first place Jodie O'Sullivan, and second place Samuel Zhu. They are joined by Run Saipan's Dr. Ron Snyder, second right, Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., far right, and Salty Skin's Joe Villacrusis, far left.

LEIGH GASES

From left, standing on bench, women's division third place of the 3rd Annual Run Saipan Salty Skin Pacific 5K, Ann Bang, first place Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez, and second place Addalee Taflinger. They are joined by Run Saipan's Dr. Ron Snyder, far left, Salty Skin's Joe Villacrusis, second right, and Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr., far right.

Checkpoint still unbeaten in Eagles caging

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Checkpoint is still unbeaten in the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023, after showing no mercy to still winless IT&E, 118-79, last Thursday at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

Chioni Dela Cruz sped through the court and stopped everyone in their tracks as he led Checkpoint with break-neck speeds and precise attempts from within and outside the perimeter.

Dela Cruz opened up the game with back-to-back 3-pointers, and with contributions from Keith Santos, Gab Camacho, and Ron Esmores, Checkpoint's first quarter quickly went to 29 over IT&E's 11 points.

Dela Cruz stayed true to his form as he continued attacking from the outside, and adding a bit of flare with fast-break attempts from within the paint. He brought his team from 29 to 55 points by the end of the first quarter—with IT&E still slogging behind at 27 points.

IT&E's Patrick Morales tried to shoulder the team's burdens as he zoomed through the court—opening himself to passes and taking sure shots. At the end, he had

See CHECKPOINT on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, Checkpoint's Coby Santos leaps for the layup as an incoming 670 Rollers defender tries to fend him off during their game in the Inaugural SMEC-SMLEG Invitational Basketball Tournament 2023 at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.